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who wears
khakis?

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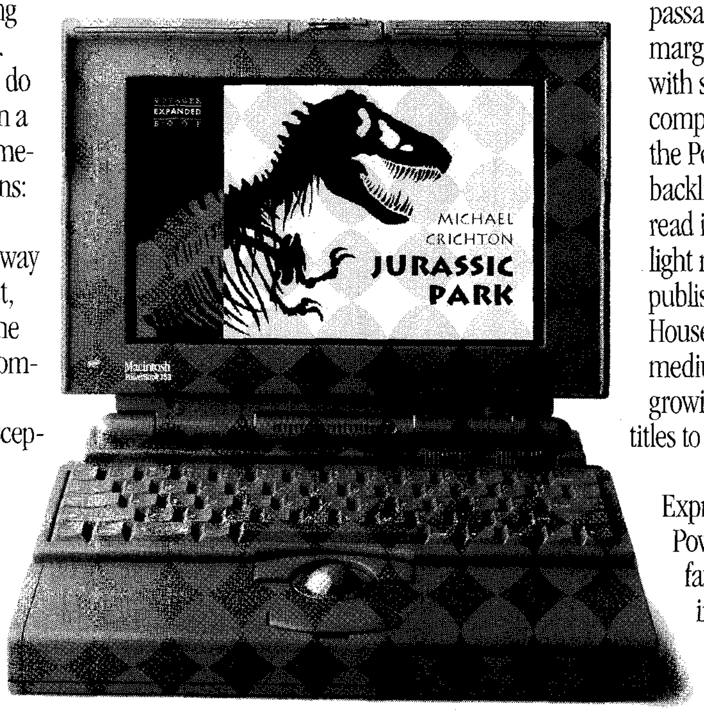

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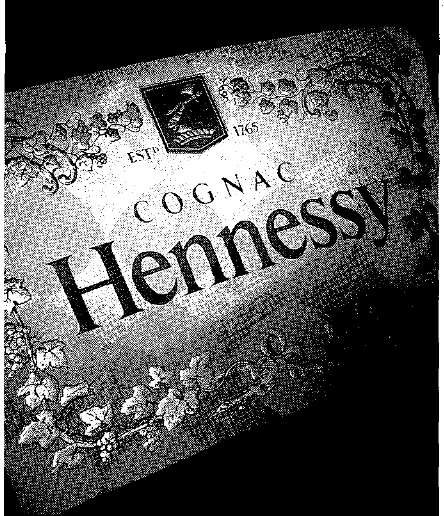

AUGUST 3rd *through*

AUGUST 8th

COMMENT

DARKENING NICARAGUA

THE first rebellion ever to be conducted in the New World in the name of Western ideals broke out in Nicaragua in 1549, within living memory of Columbus's voyages. The brothers Contreras, Hernando and Pedro, sons of one of Nicaragua's original Spanish governors, rose up against the empire their father had served. They stabbed to death the Catholic bishop of the town of León Viejo; organized a rebel army; and fought for independence. In a sense, the rebellion of the brothers was the ancestor of all fights for freedom in the Americas. But the motive that prompted them to rebel was the Spanish monarchy's decision, mandated by the Pope, to prohibit the enslavement of Indians in the New World. So the first battle for freedom was also a battle for slavery. The rebellion failed, and afterward the Momotombo volcano erupted, destroying León Viejo, as if by a curse of God. Instead of rebellion, there was ash, and darkness ruled.

On July 21, 1993, a rebellion broke out fifty miles from the site of that ancient uprising. The new rebellion took place in the provincial city of Estelí, in northern Nicaragua. About a hundred and fifty guerrillas, organized in a group that calls itself the Revolutionary Front of Workers and Campesinos (FROC, in its Spanish acronym), invaded Estelí, looted the bank, and hunkered down to defend their conquest. Their leader, who goes by the name of Pedrito the Honduran, was a disaffected former officer in the Sandinista People's Army, the one-time insurgent force that in 1979 became Nicaragua's official military service. Many of Pedrito's guerrillas, it is said, were from a red-tile-and-adobe cowboy village called El Regadío. Like their leader, these men had become skilled soldiers in the war against the Contras. Although there is no longer a Sandinista government, the Sandinista People's Army, under the command of General Humberto Ortega (former President Daniel Ortega's brother), remains Nicaragua's official military service. At two in the morning on July 22nd, it arrived to put down the rebellion. The resulting battle was fierce. More than forty people are said to have been killed. The fight between official Sandinistas and dissident Sandinistas at Estelí was among the bloodiest single incidents in

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the bloody history of modern Nicaragua.

Pedrito the Honduran escaped to the mountains with the money but without the majority of his men, so his attack on Estelí was not entirely a success. But neither was the battle entirely a success for General Ortega, who had never before—not even during the Contra war—seen the fall of a large city in territory under his control. And over the wreckage and the corpses a dark ash of rumor and doubt immediately fell. It was said that General Ortega, in a Machiavellian mode, had himself instigated the guerrilla attack, and that his purpose was to demonstrate the indispensability of his own Army while conveniently slaughtering his own worst enemies. That is a fairly wild theory, but it should be noted that, in the fearful, even paranoid, atmosphere of Nicaragua, some serious and knowledgeable political observers did not discount the possibility that it might be true.

Democracy is transparent, dictatorship opaque. The inscrutability of the events in Estelí should suggest to us that the structures of power in Nicaragua do not precisely conform to the principles of democratic government. Violeta Chamorro was elected President in 1990 on the strength of her promise to establish a Western-style democracy, as opposed to the Communist-style "people's democracy" of the Sandinistas. But everyone in Nicaragua knows that Mrs. Chamorro has no real authority over General Ortega. According to Articles 92 through 97 of the Nicaraguan Constitution, and a law left over from the Sandinista regime, the President neither controls the Army nor appoints its commander-in-chief; he is, in effect, legally entitled to appoint himself.

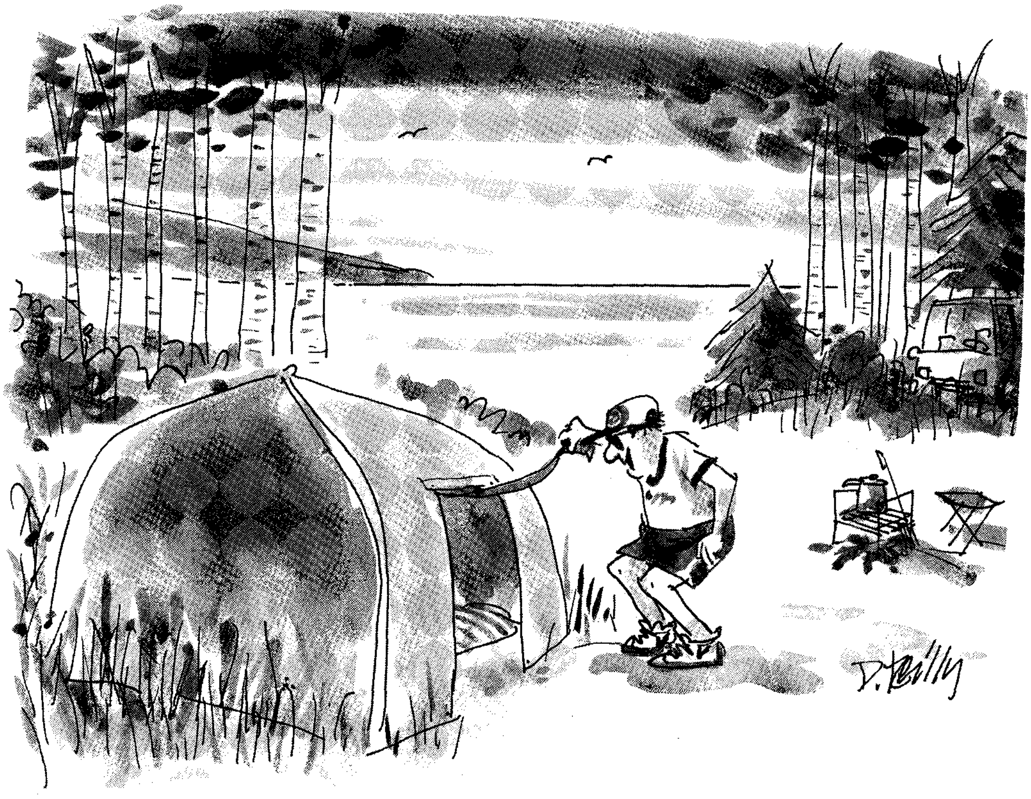
General Ortega rules not only over the Army but over the Army's private business empire, which consists of construction and furniture-manufacturing companies, commercial air transport, control of fishing rights, and investments in Costa Rica. And if, as seems probable, General Ortega is now the most widely hated man in most of the countryside, it is because he has become for many people in Nicaragua the country's leading symbol of injustice, brutality, power, and avarice—not entirely unlike the old dictator General Anastasio Somoza, who was overthrown by the revolutionary forces commanded by none other than General Ortega.

A second opaque element in Nicaraguan life is the world of the little campesino villages from which Pedrito the Honduran has drawn his support. The United States has intermittently intervened in fights among Nicaragua's northern campesinos ever since 1927, but in all that time we have learned hardly anything about the people of those rural zones. The fault is partly ours, of course; but getting to understand the remote campesinos is not easy. They are unable to articulate their needs and desires in the language of modern politics. And, in consequence, every bit of news that filters out of the rural zones takes us by surprise.

The 1990 elections, when the rural zones voted overwhelmingly against the Sandinistas, were a shock to the Sandinistas themselves. The suffering that the campesinos turned out to have undergone during the Contra war was a second shock. We in the outside world knew about the Contra massacres; but only after the war was over and Mrs. Chamorro became President did campesinos venture to lead journalists to secret mass graves that contained the bodies of evangelical Christians and other campesinos who had been massacred by the Sandinistas.

The guerrilla movements of today, which sprang from ex-Contras and ex-Sandinistas alike, affirm political ideologies that are antiquated and anomalous. The leading unit of rearmed ex-Contras is called Front 3-80 and enjoys the support of ultra-rightist Cuban exiles from Miami. Pedrito the Honduran's FROC affirms a dissident doctrine of the diehard extreme left and seems to be supported by no outside forces at all. The two groups make the same demands for land, jobs, and farm credits, and have the same list of enemies—General Ortega, his Sandinista People's Army, and the government of President Chamorro—but whether these rural guerrilla groups are fighting for freedom or slavery who can say?

One certainty shines through the darkness and ash of these bloody events. A number of small republics around the world are failing to make the transition from Communist-style government to democracy. Most of those countries are far away from us, in places like the Caucasus and the Balkans, and may be said to have stronger moral claims on Western Europe and on Russia than on the United States. But one of those troubled and stumbling countries has the kind of moral claim on American help that can spring only from deep historical roots. That country is the tiny volcanic republic that can be found, as Ronald Reagan liked to remind us, just two days' driving time from Harlingen, Texas. ◆



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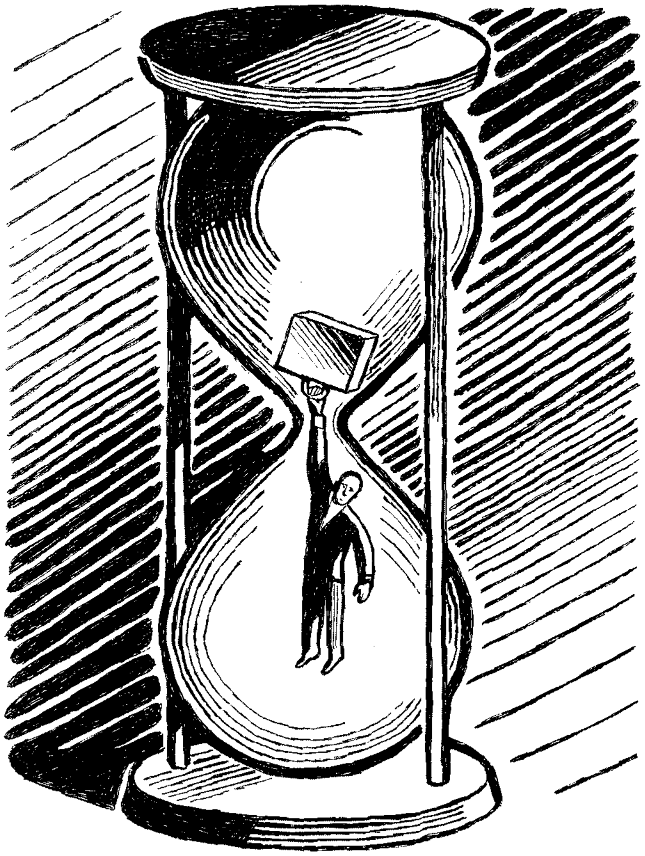

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GOINGS ON ABOUT TOWN

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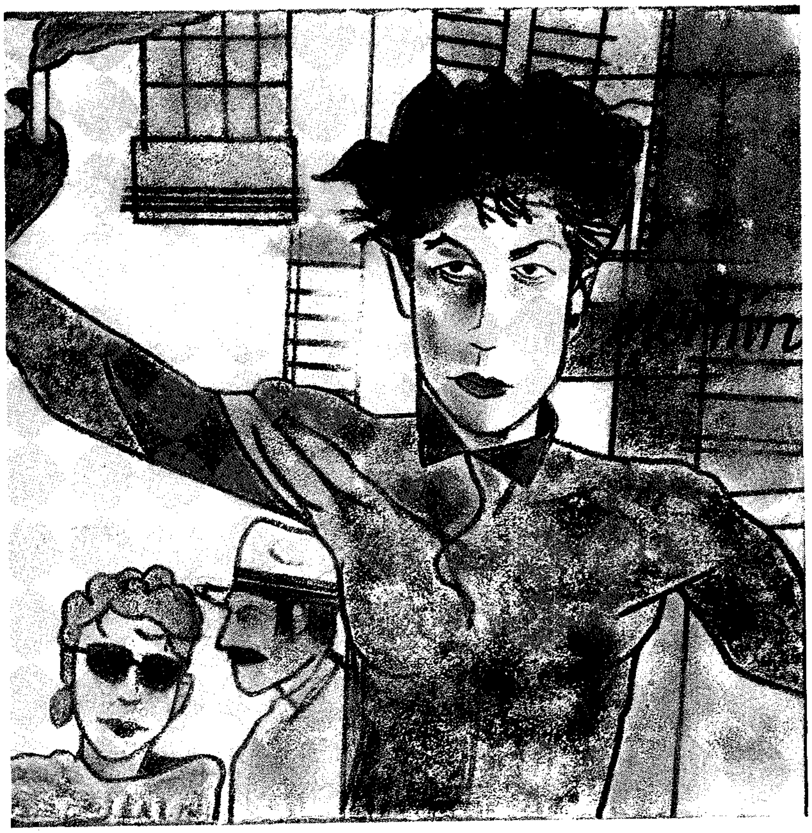
THE THEATRE

Scene Stealer

"ALL'S WELL THAT ENDS WELL" is one of Shakespeare's knottiest texts, so it's lucky for the director Richard Jones, whose opera-inflected staging of it begins performances this week in Central Park, that he has Michael Cumpsty as an unraveler. Before decamping west two years ago to play a menacing litigator on "L.A. Law," the thirty-three-year-old actor had applied his smoothing intelligence to six shows at the Public Theatre, as well as to Mr. Jones' Broadway curio "La Bête." Aided by a baritone that could make him a fortune in phone sex, Mr. Cumpsty achieves his clarity seemingly without effort. So craftily—and brilliantly—did he play Laertes in Kevin Kline's "Hamlet" that only when the bodies were cleared did you realize who had walked off with the show.

In "All's Well" Mr. Cumpsty is Parolles, a part whose combination of strutting peacock and vainglorious warrior has taxed actors for centuries. "It's fashionable to have Parolles indicate idiocy," Mr. Cumpsty says, "but when you examine the text he's not illogical after all." Still, Parolles isn't an obvious assignment for a leading man of this calibre. "My natural tendencies are to be strong and dark and a little confused," Mr. Cumpsty says. "Creatively confused, I hope."



Dianne Wiest, Jaime Tirelli, and the late Jane Bowles, author of "In the Summer House."

OPENINGS AND PREVIEWS

(Please call the phone number listed with the theatre for schedule and ticket information.)

ALL'S WELL THAT ENDS WELL—Michael Cumpsty, Miriam Healy-Louie, Joan MacIntosh, Henry Stram, and Graham Winton have the leads in Shakespeare's play. Previews begin Aug. 5. (Delacorte Theatre, Central Park near W. 81st St. For information about free tickets, which are required, call 861-7277.)

ANNIE WARBUCKS—The sequel to "Annie." With Kathryn Zaremba, in the musical's title role, Harve Presnell, and Donna McKechnie. The book is by Thomas Meehan, the music is by Charles Strouse, and the lyrics and direction are by Martin Charnin. Previews through Aug. 8. Opens Aug. 9 at 6:30. (Variety Arts, Third Ave. at 14th St. 239-6200.)

OPENED RECENTLY

ANGELS IN AMERICA: MILLENNIUM APPROACHES—The first half of Tony Kushner's epic work is set in 1985, at the height of the Reagan counterrevolution, and it maps the trickle-down effect of self-interest as Kushner's characters ruthlessly pursue their private and public destinies. The Pulitzer Prize-winning play is a saga about sexual politics, death, and decency. Not to be missed. (Reviewed in our issue of 5/31/93.) (Walter Kerr, 219 W. 48th St. 239-6200.)

BLOOD BROTHERS—A glum non-musical musical, imported from Britain, about twin boys who are separated at birth. The boys later become friends, love the same girl, and die violent deaths. Willy Russell wrote book, music, and lyrics, to no avail. The cast includes Brian d'Arcy James, Stephanie Lawrence, and Mark Michael Hutchinson. (5/10/93) (Music Box, 239 W. 45th St. 239-6200.)

CAMELOT—"Camelot" is made of sturdy stuff, and it's a good thing, too, given this production's direction and set design. Robert Goulet rises far above his surroundings and has created a worthy successor to his Lancelot. Just close your eyes and listen. (Gershwin, 51st St. west of Broadway. 307-4100. Closes Aug. 7.)

FOOL MOON—Bill Irwin and David Shiner are the inspired clowns in a show that is perfection itself. The only sound you'll hear is the merry music of the Red Clay Ramblers and the abundant laughter of the audience. (3/8/93) (Richard Rodgers, 226 W. 46th St. 221-1211.)

FORBIDDEN BROADWAY 1993—Once again, a galaxy of parodies that sharpen into satire. Among the shows under consideration are "Guys and Dolls," "Falsettos," "Les Misérables," and "The Phantom of the Opera." Gerard Alessandrini, as if you had to be told, is the clever writer and director, and Susanne Blakeslee, Allison Briner, Brad Oscar, and Craig Wells are the performers. (1/25/93) (Theatre East, 211 E. 60th St. 838-9090.)

THE GOODBYE GIRL—Bernadette Peters and Martin Short, two brilliant, funny stars, transform this otherwise indifferent musical adaptation of Neil Simon's movie into a sporadically festive evening. Score by Marvin Hamlisch, lyrics by David Zippel. Michael Kidd directed. (3/15/93) (Marquis, Broadway at 45th St. 307-4100. Closes Aug. 15.)

HOWARD CRABTREE'S WHOOP-DEE-DOO!—A cast of nine in sixteen musical numbers. (Actors' Playhouse, 100 Seventh Ave. S. For information about tickets, call 777-7474.)

IN THE SUMMER HOUSE—Lincoln Center Theatre presents Jane Bowles' 1953 play, with Alina Arenal, Frances Conroy, Kali Rocha, Jaime Tirelli, and Dianne Wiest. (Vivian Beaumont, Lincoln Center. 239-6200. Closes Aug. 22.)

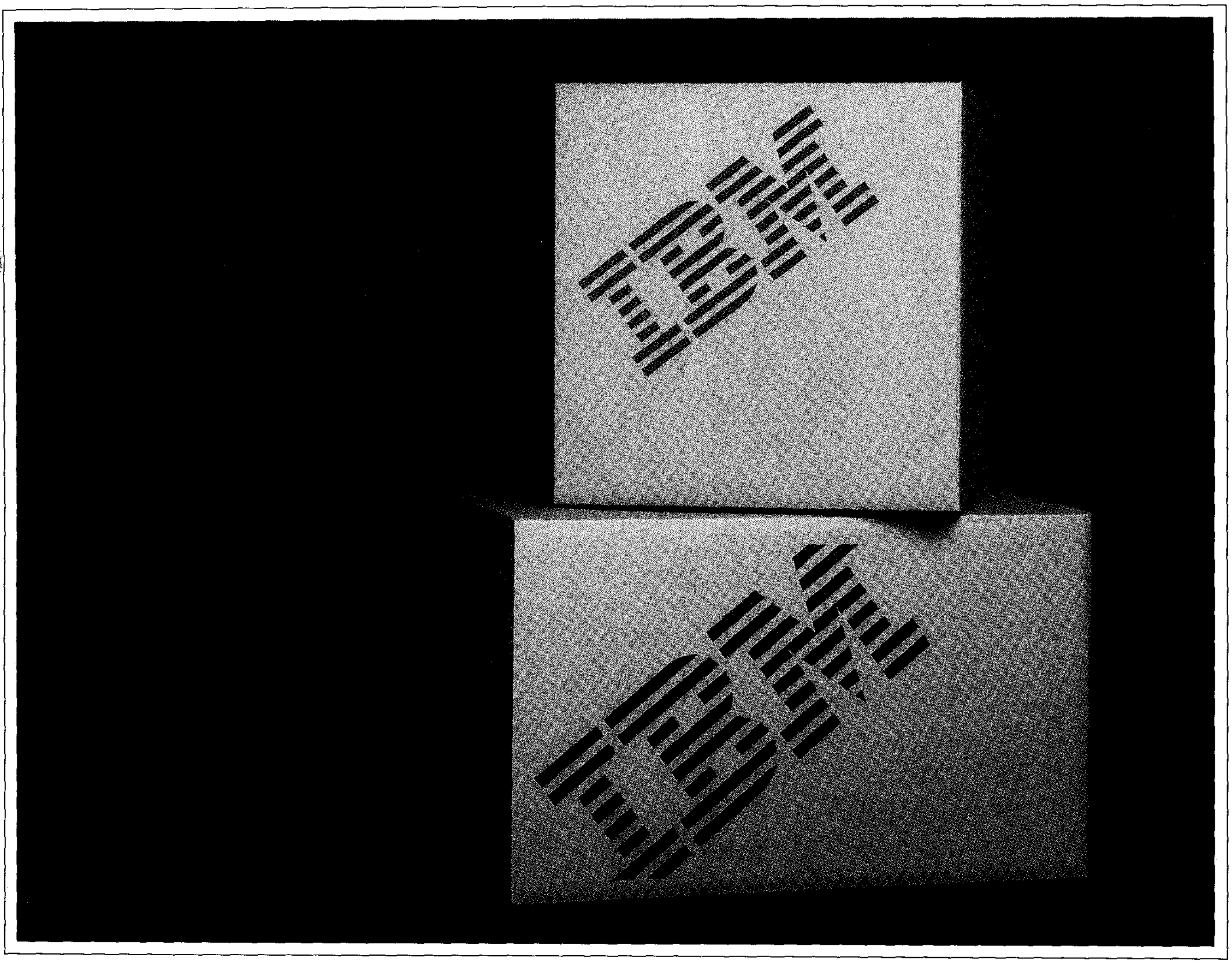
JEFFREY—A comedy, by Paul Rudnick, about love in the age of AIDS; with John Michael Higgins. It is less a fleshed-out play than a series of Scenes from Gay Life, but Mr. Rudnick can quip with the best of them. (Minetta Lane Theatre, 18 Minetta Lane. 420-8000.)

KISS OF THE SPIDER WOMAN—A musical, based on the novel by Manuel Puig, with a distinguished book by Terrence McNally, a star performance by Brent Carver, as the heroic homosexual window dresser, and another by the redoubtable Chita Rivera, in the title role. Harold Prince was the director. The songs are by John Kander and Fred Ebb. (5/24/93) (Broadhurst, 235 W. 44th St. 239-6200.)

LATER LIFE—The reunion, after thirty years, of a middle-aged man and woman who were once in love is at the heart of this play by A. R. Gurney. The scene is a cocktail party in Boston, where the couple are constantly interrupted by the other guests, who arrive two by two. Mr. Gurney has written with his customary wit and perception, and the actors do him proud. The play, which was seen recently at Playwrights Horizons, resumes performances on Aug. 9. (6/14/93) (Westside Theatre, 407 W. 43rd St. 307-4100.)

NOSTALGIA TROPICAL—A revue of Afro-Cuban music from the thirties, forties, and fifties, featuring Meme Solis. (Blue Angel, 323 W. 44th St. 262-3333.)

A PERFECT GANESH—Terrence McNally's play tells the story of two middle-aged women from Connecticut making what turns out to be a pilgrimage through India. The acting does credit to the dramatist, which is saying a lot. Zoe Caldwell plays a matron, and Frances Sternhagen is her travelling companion. Fisher Stevens shows admirable adaptability as every man in the cast, and Dominic Cuskern, as the Hindu god Ganesha, is a source of innocent and not so innocent merriment. John Tillinger directed. (7/12/93) (Manhattan Theatre Club, at City Center, 131 W. 55th St. 581-1212. Closes Aug. 21.)



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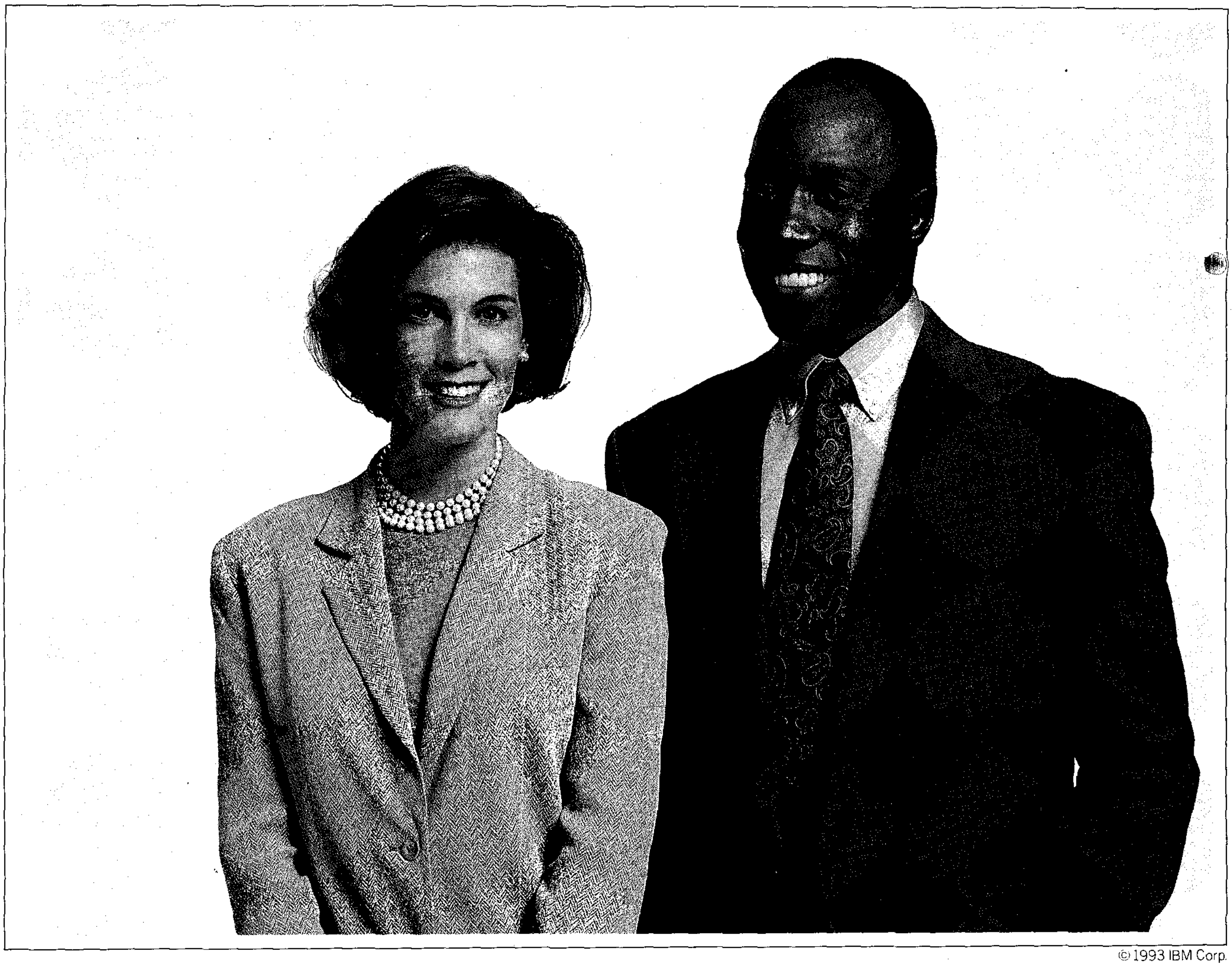

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THE THEATRE–Cont'd

Shakespeare for My Father—A marvellous one-woman show, in which Lynn Redgrave reviews her own life in a search for her unloving father, Michael Redgrave. She combines anecdotes, brilliant thumbnail impersonations of British actors, and wry reminiscence with passages from Shakespeare. (5/10/93) (Helen Hayes, 240 W. 44th St. 944-9450.)

The Sisters Rosensweig—Wendy Wasserstein's play, a comedy with serious undertones, is about the reunion in London of three American Jewish sisters—an international banker, a travel writer, and a wife and mother who's a professional dispenser of advice. They are portrayed by Jane Alexander, Christine Estabrook, and Madeline Kahn. The spirit of Chekhov hovers but never intrudes. Laughter is continuous. (11/2/92) (Ethel Barrymore, 243 W. 47th St. 239-6200.)

Sweet Daddy and Amazing Grace—Clyde Wayne MacMillian's musical is the classic preacher-meets-floozy tale with a few twists, some voodoo, and a lot of gospel singing. The first act is a bit too diffuse and relies on some old gags, but the show comes together in Act II. Christopher M. H. Wilkerson and Elmeria Rose are charming as the leads, and their voices are terrific, as are those of all the rest of the cast. Mr. MacMillian's own songs blend beautifully with the gospel and blues standards he has selected; if you like the music, you'll like the show. (American Theatre of Actors, 314 W. 54th St. For reservations, call 886-9850.)

Three Hotels—This new play by Jon Robin Baitz is no more than a technical exercise, but what technique! Debra Monk and Ron Rifkin are superb as husband and wife; the versatile Joe Mantello directed. (Circle Repertory Company, 99 Seventh Ave. S. 924-7100.)

The Who's Tommy—Pete Townshend's music—however muted for Broadway—has an indubitable thrill, but director Des McAnuff's production is caught on the horns of a theatrical dilemma that no amount of slick, exhausting spectacle can resolve. The hero, that deaf, dumb, and blind kid, is spectacularly passive, and thus unreachable, unknowable, and essentially undramatic. *(5/3/93) (St. James, 246 W. 44th St. 239-6200.)*

LONG RUNS

BEAU JEST: Lamb's, 130 W. 44th St. 997-1780. . . . **BLUE MAN GROUP/TUBES:** Astor Place Theatre, 434 Lafayette St. 254-4370. . . . **CATS:** Winter Garden, Broadway at 50th St. 239-6200. . . . **CRAZY FOR YOU:** Shubert, 225 W. 44th St. 239-6200. . . . **THE FANTASTICKS:** Sullivan Street Playhouse, 181 Sullivan St., at Bleecker St. 674-3838. . . . **FOREVER PLAID:** Steve McGraw's, 158 W. 72nd St. 595-7400. . . . **GUYS AND DOLLS:** Martin Beck, 302 W. 45th St. 239-6200. . . . **JELLY'S LAST JAM:** Virginia, 245 W. 52nd St. 239-6200. . . . **LES MISÉRABLES:** Imperial, 249 W. 45th St. 239-6200. . . . **MISS SAIGON:** Broadway Theatre, Broadway at 53rd St. 239-6200. . . . **NUNSENSE:** Douglas Fairbanks, 432 W. 42nd St. 239-4321. . . . **OLEANNA:** Orpheum, 126 Second Ave., at 8th St. 307-4100. . . . **PERFECT CRIME:** Theatre Four, 424 W. 55th St. 695-3401. . . . **THE PHANTOM OF THE OPERA:** Majestic, 245 W. 44th St. 239-6200. . . . **TONY N' TINA'S WEDDING:** St. John's Church, 81 Christopher St. 279-4200. . . . **THE WILL ROGERS FOLLIES:** Palace, Broadway at 47th St. 730-8200.

DANCE

War on Gravity

For a long time, Eliot Feld has been thinking about the untapped air-space above the stage. Now, at last, his choreography has taken off—literally left terra firma—in a new work, set to the music of Edgard Varèse and titled "MRI." At a recent rehearsal of the piece, dancers wearing biker's gloves were crawling crablike across a cargo net mounted against a wall, and cavorting like monkeys on bars suspended eight feet above the floor. "I had this idea about cargo nets and pipes and vertical movement—to this very music—twenty-three years ago," Mr. Feld said. "It could be simply acrobatic or aerial, but it's how it's applied. The idea is that the entire volume of the stage is available. Invading that space has an implicit drama."

It was the Feld company, it may be remembered, that initiated and sponsored the construction of the Joyce Theatre, which has a stage twice as wide as it is high. "MRI" will be premièred at the Joyce during the Feld's winter season, but you can satisfy that urge to be the first kid on the block at a sneak preview there during the Feld Ballets/NY's summer preview season, which opens August 9.

IN TOWN

Feld Ballets/NY—Opening performances of a two-week engagement. Aug. 9-10 at 8: "Contra Pose," "Doo Dah Day (no possum, no sop, no taters)" (preview), and "Skara Brae." (Joyce Theatre, 175 Eighth Ave., at 19th St. 242-0800. Through Aug. 21.)

Alvin Ailey American Dance Theatre—In a free performance of "Revelations," "Shelter," and "The Winter in Lisbon." (Central Park Summer-Stage, Rumsey Playfield, mid-Park at 72nd St. Aug. 10 at 8:30. No tickets necessary.)

OUT OF TOWN

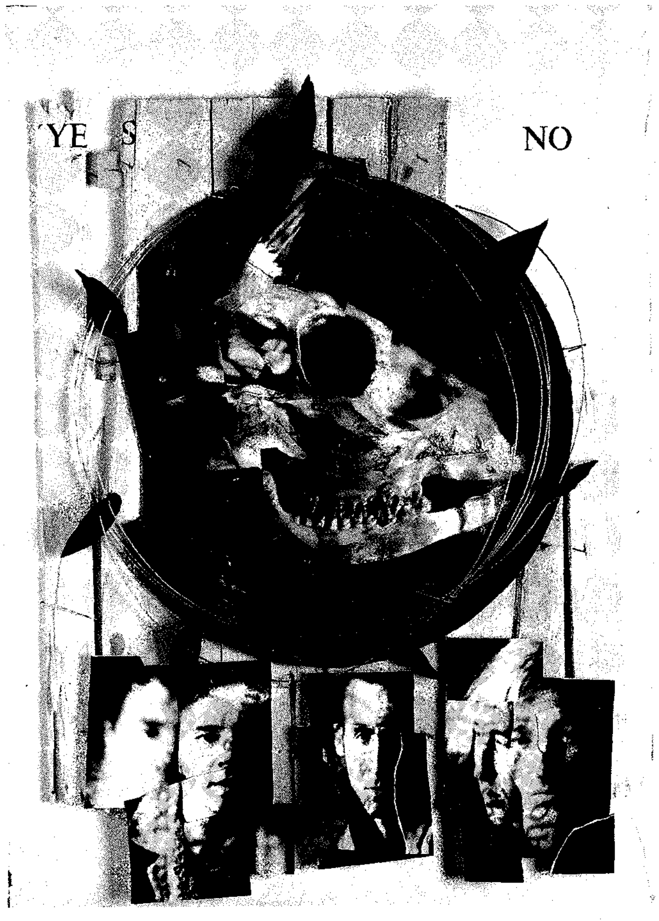
Jacob's Pillow Dance Festival—Aug. 4-5 at 8, Aug. 6 at 8:30, and Aug. 7 at 2 and 8:30: Hubbard Street Dance Chicago. . . . ¶ Aug. 6 at 8, Aug. 7 at 5, and Aug. 8 at 7: Timothy Buckley, Jazzdance by Danny Buraczeski, and the Victoria Marks Performance Company. . . . ¶ Aug. 10 at 8: Bill T. Jones/Arnie Zane Dance Company. Through Aug. 14. (Becket, Mass. 1-413 243-0745.)

NIGHT LIFE

Stampede

Grant Lee Buffalo, the band, is the brainchild of Grant Lee Phillips, a guitarist and singer who is one of the sharpest, canniest, and most indefinable new songwriters in rock. His Los Angeles-based trio, which will open for Paul Westerberg at Irving Plaza on August 5, released its first album, "Fuzzy," in March, and has been attracting fans and superlatives ever since. One of those fans is R.E.M.'s Michael Stipe, who, recognizing in Phillips a soul mate and peer, provided an enthusiastic blurb ("Best record of the year. Hands down") and reportedly offered the band the opening-act slot on R.E.M.'s next tour. Stipe also made a point of visiting the band in L.A. Perhaps not wanting to spoil a good thing, Phillips has little to report about their conversation. "We drank a lot of coffee," he says. "He drinks a *lot* of coffee."

On other matters, Phillips, a native of Stockton, California, is more forthcoming. Grant Lee is his real given name; his maternal grandfather's first name was Grant, and his paternal grandfather's name was Robert Lee Phillips. Grant Lee Buffalo was a spur-of-the-moment name that Phillips came up with when the band first started recording; they stayed with it for its "strange, mythical, paradoxical" connotations. With some hesitation, Phillips confirms rumors that he uses a Ouija board to write lyrics. "It's a useful divination tool," he says. "I've been known to turn to the strangest media for songwriting ideas—the TV, radio, everything." Then, as though he's revealed too much, he laughs and says, "Never mind."



Grant Lee Buffalo at Irving Plaza.

(A highly arbitrary listing, in which boldface type is used to pick out some of the more notable performers in town. . . . ¶ Musicians and night-club proprietors live complicated lives that are subject to last-minute change; it is therefore always advisable to call ahead to confirm engagements.)

Academy, 234 W. 43rd St.—A cozy former theatre, situated a few doors away from Times Square, where techno and alternative-rock bands, among others, occasionally turn up. **ZIGGY MARLEY & THE MELODY MAKERS** appear on Aug. 4. Ziggy and his three siblings have lived in their father's shadow since they started recording and playing reggae in the early eighties, and that shadow has suited them well. Their tunes were relentlessly perky and lightweight, with no pretensions to greatness. With their 1991 release, "Jahmekya," however, they modernized their approach, with nods to dance-hall and British hip-hop bands like Soul II Soul, and the result was a strong album and a tougher sound. For concert information, call 249-8870.

ALGONQUIN HOTEL, 59 W. 44th St. (840-6800)—Just off the lobby, the long and narrow Oak Room hosts a dependable succession of cabaret luminaries. The apparently immortal **HILDEGARDE** is in the midst of a run here. Now in her mid-nineties (but who's counting?), she styles her show as a retrospective of her life, including the composers and lyricists she's worked with—which means everybody who was anybody. You can try to keep up with her Thursdays through Saturdays. Raconteur Alex Bennett Kahn, a fabulist of fabulousness, shares his memories on Tuesdays and Wednesdays. Dining.

BALLROOM, 253 W. 28th St. (244-3005)—A cool green music hall that features a steady stream of international pop and cabaret stars, as well as the occasional drag queen. The Ballroom is also a tapas restaurant—if you haven't had dinner, you may never make it to the show. Try to, though, because resident drag star/playwright **CHARLES BUSCH** is a cutup. "The Charles Busch Revue," a parody of TV variety shows of the Carol Burnett/Judy Garland persuasion, will run through Aug. 8. Two singers (Denise Nolin and Doug Ladendorf), two dancers (David Bartee and Jim Borstelmann), and a musical combo (led by Dick Gallagher) add their bits to the merriment. The eminently mentionable **BLOSSOM DEARIE** plays and sings at the cocktail hour on Fridays and Saturdays. Closed Mondays.

BLUE NOTE, 131 W. 3rd St., near Sixth Ave. (475-8592)—Jazz, mirrors, a gift shop, and, of course, those incredible shrinking aisles that turn a mid-set dash to the rest room into something of a steeplechase. Soprano saxophonist **GEORGE HOWARD** will perform with his quintet through Aug. 8. Dining.

BOTTOM LINE, 15 W. 4th St., at Mercer St. (228-6300)—A great black loft that's jammed with row after row of tables—it looks a little like the site of a standardized test. Despite the cramped quarters, though, the Bottom Line is a pleasant place to take in a show of folk or rock. The literate and original urban folksinger **SHAWN COLVIN** will be here on Aug. 5-6. This may be your last chance to see Colvin in such an intimate setting. Following the success of her very fine second album, "Fat City," she was able to fill the Beacon Theatre earlier this year and gave a confident performance that was as big as the auditorium. She'll have no trouble charming the pants off of a few hundred fans in the Village. Darden Smith will open the show.

BRADLEY'S, 70 University Pl., at 11th St. (228-6440)—The art collection in this neighborhood restaurant, bar, and jazz club is a curator's nightmare. Fortunately, the musicians who gather round the Baldwin every night are usually more harmonious. The **KENNY DREW, JR.,** trio will perform through Aug. 7. On Aug. 8, a jazz trio featuring pianist **MIKE LE DONNE,** drummer **MICKEY ROKER,** and twenty-two-year-old hot shot **CHRISTIAN MC BRIDE,** who has played bass for everyone from Joe Henderson to Chick Corea and who was recently hailed by *Musician* as "the best upright bassist in New York." Dining.

CARLYLE HOTEL, Madison Ave. at 76th St. (744-1600)—The Café Carlyle is closed for the summer, but across the hall, in Bemelmans Bar, the smoothly sentimental singer and pianist **KURT WIETING** plays Mondays through Fridays until Labor Day.

CBGB & OMFUG, 315 Bowery, at Bleecker St. (982-4052)—Rock and roll always sounds best in a dump, which may be why this legendary club is still thriving: the management has had the good sense not to renovate. **ALICE DONUT** is scheduled to appear Aug. 4-5. **D-GENERATION** plays on Aug. 6, and **INTO ANOTHER** on Aug. 7.

FAT TUESDAY'S, 190 Third Ave., at 17th St. (533-7900)—The seating arrangement in this long, narrow, red-velvet-and-mirror-walled basement makes flying coach seem roomy; nevertheless, it's one of the city's top jazz spots—thanks largely to the club's talent bookers. The **NEW YORK SWING QUARTET** appears Aug. 3-8. Starting Aug. 10, the **GEORGE COLEMAN** quartet. On Mondays, guitarist-inventor **LES PAUL** leads a trio. Dining.

IRVING PLAZA, 17 Irving Pl., at 15th St.—This two-floor establishment has been all things to all people: meeting hall, rock club, jazz club, Off Broadway theatre. Physically, the place is sagging a bit, but it has an odd, dingy charm. As lead singer for the Replacements, the best raunchy rock band of the eighties, **PAUL WESTERBERG** nurtured a reputation both onstage and off as one of pop music's great enfants terribles. Now approaching his mid-thirties, an age when rock stars are supposed to start gaining weight and dropping literary references, Westerberg is touring in support of his first solo album, "14 Songs." The title was inspired by J. D. Salinger's "Nine Stories," but the singer and his songs retain their lean power and buoyancy, if not the raw, reckless passion that defined (and ultimately destroyed) the 'Mats. Arrive on time for his Aug. 5 show: the wonderful new band **GRANT LEE BUFFALO** is the opening act. For concert information, call 249-8870. . . . ¶ The Swing Dance Society gathers here every Sunday night, at the Continental Club. The dancers all share a passion for the Lindy Hop, a dance that involves a lot of whirling and the occasional display of underwear. **AL COBBS' BIG BAND** is in on Aug. 8. Sets from eight until midnight. For information on the society, call 696-9737.

KNICKERBOCKER, 33 University Pl., at 9th St. (228-8490)—Brass rails, vintage posters, Hirschfeld drawings, a menu full of dishes like bangers and mash, and a piano. On Aug. 4-7, pianist **RAY GALLON** performs with legendary bassist **RON CARTER.**

KNITTING FACTORY, 47 E. Houston St., near Mulberry St. (219-3055)—Situated in a neighborhood that boasts the Puck Building to the west and a host of windshield washers to the east, this modest space provides a forum for freethinking musicians. Beat and melody are optional, "music" and "noise" relative terms. On Aug. 4: the alternative rock of Woodpecker and Mellow Freakin' Woodies, plus **DRUNKEN BOAT,** a group whose postmodern brew incorporates spoken-word poetry. On Aug. 9, the **TIM BERNE** sextet is in.

LONE STAR ROADHOUSE, 240 W. 52nd St. (245-2950)—A two-tiered honky-tonk that looks as if it could have been the inspiration for the Hard Rock Café. (It wasn't, of course; money was.) Boston's hunk oddity **JONATHAN RICHMAN** will be preaching to the converted on Aug. 4-5. His songs, his stories, and his bare chest—should he deign to dispense with his shirt—are proud and fascinating assets, and no other folk rocker around can reap such enchantment from the mundane. On Aug. 6, such noted artists as Dr. John, Chris Whitley, Jimmie Dale Gilmore, Blues Traveler's John Popper, and the Jason Newsted–Kirk Hammett Blues Project (rumored to be an abbreviated version of Metallica) will pay tribute to the great blues guitarist John Campbell, who recently died of a heart attack. Dining.

MAXWELL'S, 1039 Washington St., Hoboken. (1-201 798-4064)—Many of the bands that play here today will be playing somewhere more expensive tomorrow. On Aug. 5, the bill features Littlehood, Shirk Circus, and Flatus. On Aug. 7, catch the **VULGAR BOATMEN,** Walter Salas Humara, and Kevin Salem. A calm, melodic band, the Boatmen are distinguished by actually being two bands: one for recording and one for the road (one of their songwriters is a college professor in Florida and is unable to tour). The live troupe puts on a low-key show, working a quiet magic with songs that are blissfully simple and direct.

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NIGHT LIFE—Cont'd

Michael's Pub, 211 E. 55th St. (758-2272)—A midtown restaurant and jazz lair for the tasselled-loafers set. The musical menu is currently entrusted to songstress **SARA ZAHN,** whose bill of fare—thirties and forties pop classics by Gershwin, Porter, Rodgers, and their ilk—leaves room in each performance for daily specials, served up according to the character and taste of the audience (assuming they have character and taste). Monday nights are given over to the New Orleans Funeral and Ragtime Orchestra, with Woody Allen on clarinet; the group has been a fixture here for twenty-two years, through the best of times, through the worst of times. Closed Sundays.

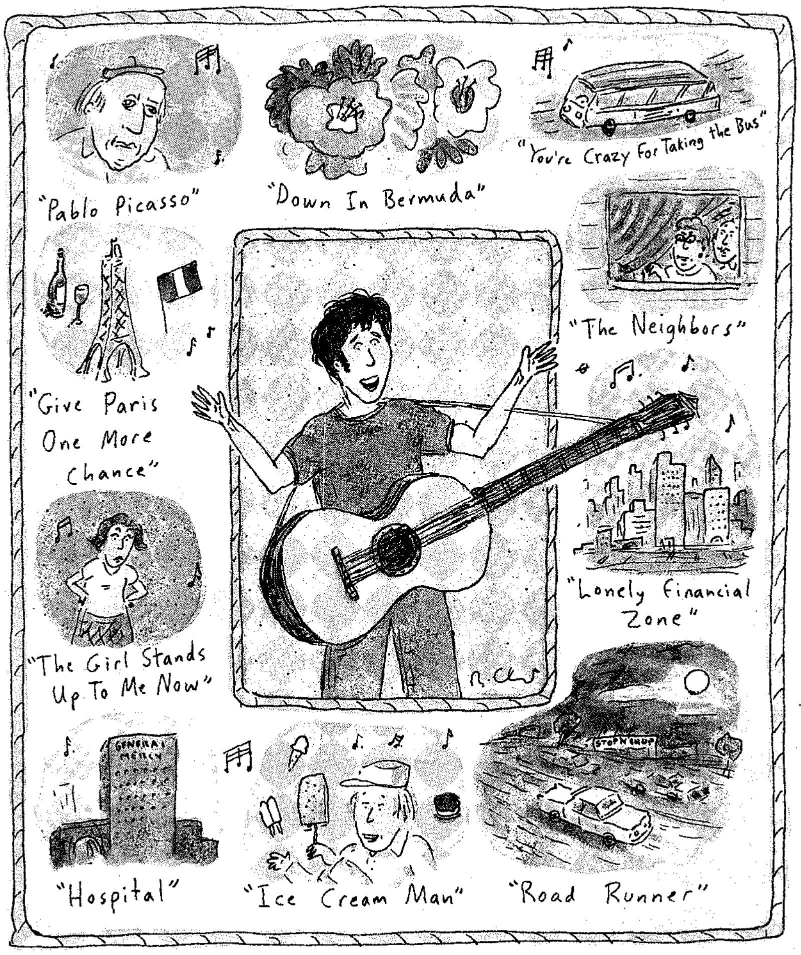
Rainbow & Stars, 30 Rockefeller Plaza. (632-5000)—Not to be confused with its richer cousin, the Rainbow Room, which is just down the hall. A summer-long Lerner and Loewe revue, called "The Night They Invented Champagne," is currently under way, with **MAUREEN BRENNAN, EDDIE KORBICH, JULIET LAMBERT,** and **MARTIN VIDNOVIC.** This light but energetic show presents such classics as "On the Street Where You Live" and less well known numbers like "She Is Not Thinking of Me." The singers have big, confident voices and an intimate way with lyrics—no thanks to an overbearing sound system. Closed Mondays.

Red Blazer Too, 349 W. 46th St. (262-3112)—A place where a fella and a gal can put on the feedbag, get a little tight, and cut a rug. Mondays belong to the Smith Street Society jazz band, Tuesdays to Jim Lawyer and his Bluebird orchestra, Thursdays to Stan Rubin's big band, Fridays to Lew Anderson's big band and Sam Ulano and His Swingers, and Saturdays to Bob Cantwell and His Stompers. On Aug. 4, the **BOB LITWAK** group, with **MILT HINTON, PHIL BODNER,** and **MARTY NAPOLEON** will perform.

Sounds of Brazil, 204 Varick St., at W. Houston St. (243-4940)—A great grass party hut with a fruit-and-bamboo motif. On Aug. 4, **JIM CHAPPELL** and **GREG OSBY.** On Aug. 6, the sounds of Haiti with **BOUKMAN EKSPERYANS.** Closed Sundays. Dining.

Sweet Basil, 88 Seventh Ave. S., at Bleecker St. (242-1785)—This brown-toned ski chalet of a club is a fine place to study jazz-group dynamics. The **ART FARMER** quintet is in for a two-week run. An electrified big band belonging to trumpeter **MILES EVANS** is in action on Mondays. Dining.

Tavern on the Green, Central Park W. at 67th St. (873-3200)—With the opening of the Chestnut Room, this legendary tourist haven is making a bid to attract serious jazz fans. The club, which resembles a hunting lodge, is every bit as over the top as the rest of the establishment, but the bookings have been impressive. Through Aug. 8: the singers' singer **JIMMY SCOTT,** whose intuitive phrasing and remarkable countertenor have inspired many noted jazz and pop balladeers, and whose nearly fifty-year-old career got a belated kick in the pants last year, when some of his lost recordings from the sixties and seventies were re-released. Beginning Aug. 10: Diva, an all-female fifteen-piece big band. Dining.



Jonathan Richman at the Lone Star Roadhouse.

Time Café, 380 Lafayette St. (533-7000)—Hidden inside this trendy restaurant is a two-story club called Fez. The downstairs room, where bands perform, is rather plain, but still a sleek and comfortable spot to take in a show. The **MINGUS BIG BAND** packs them in every Thursday. The fourteen-piece ensemble, directed by baritone saxophonist **RONNIE CUBER,** concentrates exclusively on the tricky, cacophonous work of its catalyst, the late Charles Mingus. On Aug. 6, **FRED WESLEY** with **HOUSE OF PAYNE.** Dining.

Tompkins Square Restaurant, 141 Avenue A, at 9th St. (260-4798)—A homey night spot where you can watch the East Village parade pass by and study the latest styles in survival footwear and tattoos. The restaurant is split down the middle to separate those who drink from those who eat *and* drink. The menu is vegetarian-friendly. The atmosphere is a bit old-fashioned. Just now there are some white Christmas lights strung up over the bar, an informal art show on the walls, and jazz outfits on the stage Thursdays through Saturdays. Celtic guitarist **PIERCE TURNER** is in on Aug. 6.

Tramps, 45 W. 21st St. (727-7788)—A broad, spacious, and agreeable club, near what was once called Ladies' Mile but might now be termed the pool-hall district. On Aug. 4, Christine Santelli and the Dickens Blues Band will open for blues guitarist Larry McCray. One of New York's most celebrated funk outfits, **THE AUTHORITY,** will play on Aug. 5; their friends Cosmic Ghetto open. Blues legend **CHARLIE MUSSELWHITE** brings his harp to the club on Aug. 6. On Aug. 7, the local rockabilly heroes in the **ROBERT GORDON BAND** headline a bill featuring their North Carolina counterparts, the **BELMONT PLAYBOYS.**

Village Vanguard, 178 Seventh Ave. S., at 11th St. (255-4037)—The world's most famous jazz club remains thick with the spirits of past masters. **DOROTHY DONEGAN** leads a trio here through Aug. 8. After an apprenticeship in the clubs of her native Chicago, Donegan cultivated a relatively expansive style in which her vivid pianism is accompanied by a sort of jazz-diva aerobics. Beginning on Aug. 10, the hallowed stage is ceded to the pianistic jubilations of **AHMAD JAMAL,** who will head a trio. Is there a Pittsburgh style in jazz? Maybe not, but the Golden Triangle's contributions to the field have been notable, including not only Jamal (who started life's journey there, in 1930, under the name Fritz Jones) but also Earl (Fatha) Hines and Erroll Garner—not to mention Mary Lou Williams and Billy Strayhorn, who did much of their growing up in that city. The **VANGUARD JAZZ ORCHESTRA** holds sway on Mondays.

EDGE OF NIGHT LIFE

Most folks know certain efforts are dumb, but they just can't help themselves: pressing an elevator button that's already lit, honking at a garbage truck, looking back in how-dare-you disgust at a tripped-over crack in the sidewalk.

Add to these locking the gate to Casa La Femme. Imagine anyone *judging whether you can* be admitted to a once-holy site (turn to 1990 in your nocturnal hymnal and begin at the top of "Ode to 150 Wooster") that has been reconfigured with enough netting and muslin to inspire Everett Quinton to Ridiculous Theatricalize "Out of Africa." How irresistible are long, impassable tables filled with the Young and the Feckless? (Lawyers, take note: ponytails are still in, provided you gather them much higher up, like bobby-soxers, and rubber-band them at table.) How much do you want to see four couples guzzle Cuervo Gold straight from the bottle, with the bar spigot still in it? It would be more fun to take a three-dollar cab ride and ask the driver for change for a fifty.

IN ANOTHER CATEGORY—
PERFORMANCE ART, ETC.

P.S. 122—Aug. 5-8 at 7:30: "Cabaret de la Gay (In D Minor)," Sharon Jane Smith's tribute to female cabaret performers. Through Aug. 15. . . . ¶ Aug. 5-6 at 9: Ken Bullock's "My Life Is a Show," which is promoted as a "one-man Southern saga." Through Aug. 15. . . . ¶ Aug. 7-8 at 9: Tim Miller in a return engagement of "My Queer Body." (150 First Ave., at 9th St. 477-5288.)

ART

Paper Trail

THE Met's current exhibition of works on paper by Abstract Expressionists is a low-key, offbeat browsing experience that seems to be directed at viewers who don't need much filling in. The show begins with works from the mid-thirties and early forties, when the movement hadn't yet taken shape or been named, and it leaves off with a few eclectic pieces from the mid-sixties—by Motherwell, for the most part—when the style itself had already filtered down through three generations. The epic dimensions of the middle period, embodied by Pollock's hectic skeins and Barnett Newman's holy voids, are pretty much left to the imagination. This is in part because works on paper from this period tend to be small, and Ab-Ex heroics depend a lot on scale, but it is also because the curators seem not to have had their collective eye on any particular ball. Philip Guston, for instance, makes his appearance late in the game, when his work wasn't Ab-Ex any longer, while a little-known artist such as Gerome Kamrowski is introduced, with two works from 1943, without any follow-up at all.

This scattershot approach has miscellaneous rewards: exquisite early drawings, for example, by Newman that recall the French symbolist Redon; two surprisingly intense, late de Kooning "women"; and works by William Baziotes that should revive his reputation as a colorist. Several other artists also seem ripe for reappraisal, including Anne Ryan, whose serial collages, from 1949, suggest all sorts of delicate European precedents, like Schwitters and Klee, as well as later developments in Conceptual art.

MUSEUMS AND LIBRARIES

METROPOLITAN MUSEUM, Fifth Ave. at 82nd St.—"Abstract Expressionism: Works on Paper, Selections from the Collection." Through Sept. 12. . . . ¶ "Drawings from the J. Paul Getty Museum." Much has been made of the Getty's buying power, especially effective in the sometimes undervalued areas of Old Master drawings and prints. And, indeed, there's magnificent material here—most notably in the grand categories of portrait studies focussed on heads and of genre scenes charged with classical rhetoric. A veritable daisy chain of period attitudes—erect or askew, in mint condition—leads us out of High Renaissance amour propre and sobriety, to far-gone outcroppings of the rococo, past a couple of small masterpieces of nineteenth-century big-picture realism, and on up to an excellent van Gogh drawing and a spectacular Cézanne print. Through Aug. 8. . . . ¶ Verrocchio's larger-than-life "Christ and St. Thomas," a Medici commission completed in 1483, was recently restored and sent here for a visit (it's normally on view in a granary-cum-oratory in Florence). It's a magnificent, imposing sculpture, despite the intimacy of the scene, and a major feat of quattrocento engineering. . . . ¶ Jefferson R. Burdick (1900-63), an electrician by trade, set out to assemble the world's largest collection of baseball cards, and some of his acquisitions are now on view in the American Wing, a few steps away from the Temple of Dendur. The cards date from 1887 to 1958 and are a charming chronicle of baseball's development. . . . ¶ Forty examples of Persian tiles, from the twelfth century through the late nineteenth, in a snug, one-room exhibit. (Open Tuesdays through Sundays, 9:30 to 5:15, and Friday and Saturday evenings until 9.) . . . **NOTE:** The roof garden, featuring six large sculptures, a great view, and cappuccino, is open when weather permits.

MUSEUM OF MODERN ART, 11 W. 53rd St.—"Latin-American Artists of the Twentieth Century" includes more than ninety artists, most notably Tarsila do Amaral (1886-1973), a lively Cubo-Surrealist painter from Brazil, and Jesús Rafael Soto, the Venezuelan whose brilliant Op constructions, famous during the sixties, seem timely again. The younger generation, including Julio Galán and Guillermo Kuitca, is especially strong. Through Sept. 7. . . . ¶ "Pastime in Prints," very much a summer show, includes more than seventy depictions of leisure and outdoor activity by fifty artists, from Degas to Picasso to Hopper. Through Sept. 28. . . . ¶ "Multiple Images: Photographs Since 1965 from the Collection" features work by Jan Groover, Sol LeWitt, Duane Michals, and Charles Ray. Through Sept. 28. . . . ¶ Fifteen new large-scale linoleum-block prints by Chuck Close. Through Sept. 28. (Open daily, except Wednesdays, 11 to 6, and Thursday evenings until 9.) . . . **NOTE:** The sculpture garden, at 14 W. 54th St., is open, free, on Fridays and Saturdays, from 6 to 10, with musical performances devoted to twentieth-century Latin America.

GUGGENHEIM MUSEUM, Fifth Ave. at 89th St.—The museum presents Rebecca Horn, a German artist whose work incorporates all manner of objects, from feathers to pistols to mercury—everything except old-fashioned paint and canvas. . . . ¶ Two floors below but light-years apart, "Modern Masterpieces from the Permanent Collection," which includes paintings by Cézanne, Gauguin, van Gogh, Mondrian, Miró, and Picasso, is reassuring evidence that fine art still lives. (Open daily, except Thursdays, 10 to 8.)

GUGGENHEIM MUSEUM SOHO, 575 Broadway—More than seventy paintings, watercolors, drawings, and prints by Paul Klee (1879-1940). . . . ¶ "Singular Dimensions in Painting," an exhibit of minimalist work, primarily from the fifties and sixties. . . . ¶ A site-specific installation by Rebecca Horn. (Open daily, except Tuesdays, 11 to 6, and Thursday through Saturday evenings until 8.)

WHITNEY MUSEUM OF AMERICAN ART, Madison Ave. at 75th St.—"Hand-Painted Pop." This show of the early works of Pop art—before Warhol discovered silk screen or Lichtenstein the mechanical Benday dot—has a rich thesis: that Pop was linked to Abstract Expressionism, the movement it is popularly viewed in utter contrast to. To prove the point are some extraordinary paintings, such as the early Rauschenbergs from the Sonnabend collection and key Johnses and painterly Warhols, great Oldenburgs and Rosenquists from the Museum of Contemporary Art, in L.A. It also accounts for some fascinating, if unresolved, works, like a pre-Pop brushy abstract by Lichtenstein. The show is most commendable in its efforts to broaden the canon, but this often results in farfetched inclusions, such as Jean Follett, an artist whose works seem to have more to do with Dada than Pop. . . . ¶ "In the Spirit of Fluxus." This wonderful show has set for itself the formidable task of re-creating within a museum an art movement that stood in opposition to the reverence and élitism that

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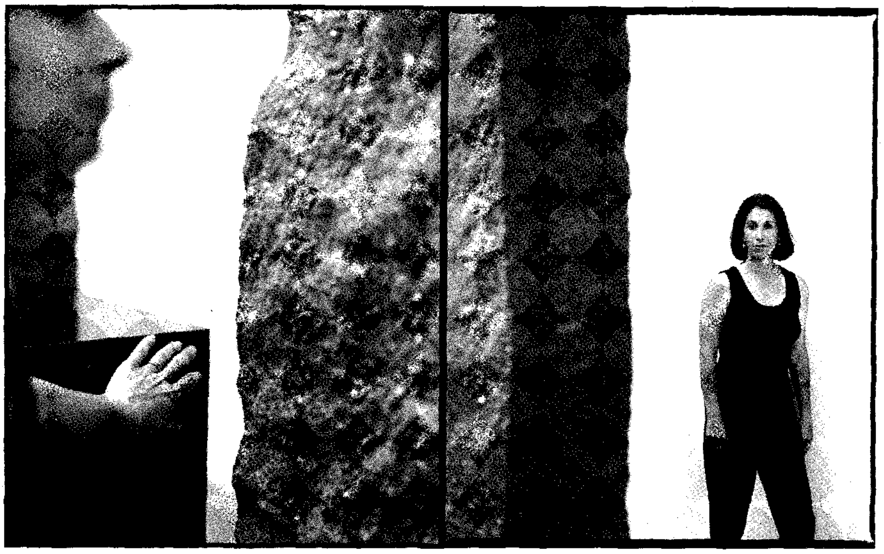


Elyn Zimmerman at Gagosian.

define museums. Founded by the artist George Maciunas around 1962, Fluxus attracted an international cast, whose more famous practitioners included Joseph Beuys in Germany and John Cage and Nam June Paik in the United States. According to Fluxus, art was in the everyday, and therefore could be almost anything. The show includes everything from a re-creation of Ben Vautier's "Living Sculpture," originally constructed for the 1962 Festival of Misfits, in London, to documents of a typical Fluxus performance, "13 Ways to Use Emmett Williams' Skull." Fluxus was about wacky dreams, and perhaps the show's one serious deficiency is its dearth of the proposals Maciunas incessantly devised for a utopian Fluxus world. . . . ¶ "Hopper in Paris" consists of twenty-five works that Hopper painted in the early nineteen-hundreds. Through Sept. 19. . . . ¶ "The Subject of Rape," an installation that examines rape in art, history, law, and the media. Through Aug. 29. . . . ¶ "Abject Art." Through Aug. 29. (Open Wednesdays, and Fridays through Sundays, 11 to 6; Thursdays, 1 to 8.)

American Museum of Natural History, Central Park W. at 79th St.—"The Hall of Human Biology and Evolution," a new permanent exhibition, includes a hologram of the interior of a woman's body, the world's largest array of pre-human and human fossil casts, a skeleton family watching TV, and a reproduction of an animal frieze from the cave of Lascaux. . . . ¶ "Bears: Imagination and Reality.". . . ¶ "The Dinosaurs of Jurassic Park" features several life-size props created for Steven Spielberg, including a Tyrannosaurus rex, a triceratops, and a velociraptor. Through Sept. 12. . . . ¶ More than fifty color photographs examining "The Pantanal: Brazil's Forgotten Wilderness," a floodplain "the size of Wyoming," home to rare and endangered animal and plant species. Through Aug. 29. (Open daily, 10 to 5:45, and Friday and Saturday evenings until 8:45.)

Brooklyn Museum, Eastern Parkway—"The Second Dimension: Twentieth-Century Sculptors' Drawings." More than seventy-five works from the museum's permanent collection, including figure drawings by Louise Nevelson and Isamu Noguchi. (Open Wednesdays through Sundays, 10 to 5.)

Jewish Museum, 1109 Fifth Ave., at 92nd St.—"From the Inside Out" showcases eight contemporary international artists, including Christian Boltanski (photographic assemblages) and Nancy Spero (heroic women in history), whose work explores the individual experience of Judaism. . . . ¶ Prints, drawings, and other works on paper, by Alice Aycock, Marc Chagall, Max Liebermann, Jules Pascin, and others, in "Collecting for the Twenty-first Century: Recent Acquisitions and Promised Gifts." (Open Mondays, Wednesdays, Thursdays, and Sundays, 11 to 5:45; Tuesdays, 11 to 8, with no admission charge after 5.)

Museum for African Art, 593 Broadway—"Home and the World: Architectural Sculpture by Aboudramane and Bodys Isek Kingelez." Aboudramane, who hails from the Ivory Coast but lives in Paris, creates bright-colored, often fantastical structures—one of his buildings has horns. Kingelez, who is from Zaire, combines urban African design with international architecture. Through Aug. 15. (Open Wednesdays, Thursdays, and Sundays, 11 to 6; Fridays and Saturdays, 11 to 8.)

National Academy of Design, Fifth Ave. at 89th St.—"American Treasures." Nineteenth-century paintings from the museum's permanent collection. Starts Aug. 4. (Open Wednesdays through Sundays, noon to 5; Friday evenings until 8, with no admission charge after 5.)

New York Public Library, Fifth Ave. at 42nd St.—"Flora Photographica: The Flower in Photography from 1835 to the Present." Much more than a collection of pretty blossoms, this exhibition of a hundred and eighty images ranges from eighteen-seventies Scowen & Company albumen prints to a 1953 shot, by Jean Dieuzaide, of Salvador Dali emerging from the water, a pair of petals balanced on the points of his waxed mustache. Through Aug. 21. (Open Tuesdays and Wednesdays, 11 to 5:45; Thursdays through Saturdays, 10 to 5:45.)

GALLERIES—DOWNTOWN

(Unless otherwise noted, galleries are open Mondays through Fridays from around 10 or 11 to between 5 and 6.)

Elyn Zimmerman—A few recent drawings and three big new granite sculptures, in an eternal-seeming post-minimalist style, apparently designed for outdoor settings. "Triad," suggestive of a high-tech Stonehenge, would look good at one end of a swimming pool. "Font" and "Vessel" are fountains themselves, bestilled and implacable. Through Sept. 11. (Gagosian, 136 Wooster St.)

"Nocturnal Sites"—Twenty-two works in various mediums—oil, watercolor, pastel, pencil—depicting New York City at night. Each piece has a specific place and mood, from the ashen buildings wavering beneath the sickly yellow sky in Richard Sloat's "Inner City" to the toxic orange glow of Esteban Chavez's photo-engraving "Con Edison at Dusk." Other pieces display a certain type of whimsy: Tony Lordi's kitschy tribute to the city's night skyline, made up entirely of dominoes, is a visually striking commentary on connection and randomness in the city; and Roxie Munro's thick outlines and bubble-like forms give a cartoonish aspect to Donald Deskey's ubiquitous street-lamp design. Mary Ellen Doyle's delicately hatched lines and muted color schemes seem to relate to a New York that never existed, although her "City Windows," with its antique-gold tinting, is quite stunning in the richness of its architectural detail. Through Aug. 28. (Ingbar, 568 Broadway.)

GALLERIES—UPTOWN

"Wish You Were Here: Vintage Postcards of New York City Parks, 1900-50"—The selection includes depictions of such sights as nattily dressed crowds around the old bandstand in Central Park; grass tennis courts at Van Cortlandt Park; the Washingt[illegible] Bridge and Harlem Speedway, with a man driving a horse and carriage; and several bygone amusement parks. Tinting and hand-coloring make the idealized scenes even more remote—a 1940 picture of Eastern Parkway, in orange and aqua, positively glows. The messages from long-lost correspondents bring the cards alive. A card of the Bronx River reads, "This is all right if you have a sweetheart.—George." The note on a postcard of a Staten Island seaside park places you squarely on the beach: "Dear Ollie, Come in and have a swim the water is fine today. Jack is in up to the neck.—Minnie." Through Aug. 31. (Arsenal Gallery, Fifth Ave. at 64th St.)

OTHER VENUES

"Monumental Propaganda"—Self-styled instigators Vitaly Komar and Alexander Melamid have invited an international cast of a hundred and fifty artists to envision the future of Soviet monuments. Their drawings, sketches, photographs, and written proposals—some of which recently appeared in this magazine—are nearly as surreal as the events that made these ideas possible. Through Oct. 3. (Courtyard Gallery, World Financial Center.)

Sculpture at Roosevelt Island—Six site-specific works placed around a transportation terminus called Motorgate. Karin Giusti's "Motorgate/Metaphysics" is a gigantic charm bracelet—pink rabbit's foot, golden wishbone, dice, etc.—strung along the top level of the ramp garage. Susan Crowder's modest, plaintive "Blackwell's," nestled in a niche in a covered plaza, is a sort of fortified skep—a small Monet haystack with a miniature barbed-wire fence around the opening in the top. Lisa Hein's "Last Roundup/Planner's Folly" is a circle of colorful twisted bicycle frames suspended over—and mocking—the complex's bike rack, which is so isolated as to suit nobody but a bicycle thief. There are additional works by Simon Lee, Andy Yoder, and Kendall Buster.

PHOTOGRAPHY

International Center of Photography, 1130 Fifth Ave., at 94th St.—"Outside the Dream: Child Poverty in America." Black-and-white works by photojournalist Stephen Shames. (Open daily, except Mondays, 11 to 6, and Tuesday evenings until 8.)

International Center of Photography Midtown, Sixth Ave. at 43rd St.—"One Hundred Years of Broadway." (Open daily, except Mondays, 11 to 6, and Tuesday evenings until 8.)

Short List—neelon crawford: Witkin, 415 West Broadway. Through Aug. 27. . . . **françois kollar:** Zabriskie, 724 Fifth Ave., at 57th St. Through Sept. 18. . . . **daido moriyama:** Laurence Miller, 138 Spring St. Through Aug. 8. . . . **margaret morton/skeet mcauley:** Lowinsky, 575 Broadway. Through Sept. 4. . . . **minayoshi takada:** Houk Friedman, 851 Madison Ave., at 70th St. Through Sept. 10.

(See the museum listings for photography exhibitions at the Museum of Modern Art, the Museum of Natural History, and the New York Public Library.)

STEPHEN BARKER

MUSIC

Back to the Future

THERE is something about the first adumbrations of a new artistic style that shines in posterity's eyes. Economy of construction, unforced simplicity of invention, and an almost mystically radiant cautiousness of step are visited on certain artists at certain moments of innovation, which become milestones only in retrospect. Once they we're securely formed, "new" styles bring the gift of renewed contact with the familiar. So Marc-Antoine Charpentier and Henry Purcell, taking up the strands of musical drama in the late seventeenth century, handling exquisite materials spun in Italy scarcely a human life span earlier, thought of the classics, and each brought into being a brief, quiet masterpiece of retelling. Charpentier's "Actéon," probably composed between 1683 and 1685 for the Parisian establishment of the Duchess of Guise, has only lately come into circulation in performance. Purcell's "Dido and Aeneas," most improbably but definitely composed for a girls'-school commencement exercise in 1689, has been wondered at and lamented (for the English operatic tradition it could have founded but did not) for the better part of its three centuries' existence.

The person most responsible for Charpentier's resuscitation is William Christie, director of the ensemble Les Arts Florissants, which will perform these operas as a double bill at Mostly Mozart on August 9. It's a pairing as logical as "Cav and Pag," those concise twins of newborn naturalism in Italian opera, two hundred years later. There's also an internal link, in that Purcell's librettist imagined the seeds of Dido's doom being sown on the very spot at which Actéon met his fate, "pursued by his own hounds/and after mortal wounds/discover'd too, too late."

IN TOWN—OPERA

New York City Opera—CARMEN, with Sharon Graham and Antonio Barasorda; conducted by Guido Ajmone-Marsan. (Aug. 5 at 8.) . . . LA BOHÈME, with Eva Zseller as Mimì; conducted by Karen Keltner. (Aug. 6 at 8 and Aug. 8 at 1:30.) . . . MADAMA BUTTERFLY, performed with its score as it stood in 1904, before Puccini added Pinkerton's third-act aria and cut a lullaby that Cio-Cio-San sings to little Trouble; with Elizabeth Hynes in the title role; conducted by Christopher Keene. (Aug. 7 at 1:30.) . . . TOSCA, with Elizabeth Holleque as the diva's diva; conducted by Steven Sloane. (Aug. 7 and Aug. 10 at 8.) (New York State Theatre. 870-5570. English supertitles at all performances.)

"Carmen"—An hour of highlights, with mezzo-soprano Sharon Graham and tenor Antonio Barasorda. (Tobin Plaza, World Trade Center. Aug. 9 at 12:15. No tickets necessary.)

IN TOWN—ORCHESTRAS

Mostly Mozart Festival—Aug. 4: Neeme Järvi conducts the Festival Orchestra in Mozart's F-Major Piano Concerto (K. 459, featuring Lilian Kallir), Violin Concerto No. 3 (with Maxim Vengerov), and a handful of the composer's dances, as well as in Tchaikovsky's "Mozartiana" Suite. . . . ¶ Aug. 5: Jeanne Lamon directs Tafelmusik (the Toronto-based period-instrument orchestra) in concerti grossi by Bach, Handel, and Vivaldi, as well as in Boccherini's D-Minor Symphony (ominously nicknamed "Della Casa del Diavolo"). . . . ¶ Aug. 6-7: Neeme Järvi conducts the Festival Orchestra in Mozart's Piano Concerto in E-Flat (K. 271, the "Jeunehomme," featuring Garrick Ohlsson), Symphony No. 38 (the "Prague"), and a handful of his contredanses, as well as Tchaikovsky's "Variations on a Rococo Theme" (featuring cellist Antonio Meneses). . . . ¶ Aug. 9: William Christie directs Les Arts Florissants in Purcell's "Dido and Aeneas" and Charpentier's "Actéon." . . . ¶ Aug. 10: George Cleve conducts the Festival Orchestra in Haydn's Symphony No. 93 and Violin Concerto No. 1 (with Gil Shaham) and Mozart's Symphony No. 36 (the "Linz") and A-Major Piano Concerto (K. 488, with Horacio Gutiérrez). (Avery Fisher Hall. 875-5030. Evenings at 8.)

Tchaikovsky Chamber Orchestra—Lazar Gosman conducts Tchaikovsky's "Serenade for Strings" and "Meditation for Violin" (featuring Anna Kandinskaya), as well as Arensky's "Variations on a Theme by Tchaikovsky." (Winter Garden, World Financial Center, Battery Park City. Aug. 4 at 7:30. No tickets necessary.)

IN TOWN—RECITALS

Bargemusic—Mozart's Violin Sonata in B-Flat (K. 454), Ravel's Violin and Cello Sonata, and Beethoven's Piano Trio in E-Flat (Op. 70, No. 2); with violinist Mark Peskanov, cellist Ronald Thomas, and pianist Randall Hodgkinson. (Fulton Ferry Landing, Brooklyn. 1-718 624-4061. Aug. 5 at 6:30 and Aug. 8 at 4, the Thursday event commencing with a candlelit dinner.)

Summergarden—The Museum of Modern Art's Latin-American festival continues with chamber music by composers from Venezuela, Panama, Mexico, and Chile, as well as by a contingent of Argentinians: Gustavo Moretto, Mauricio Kagel, Gerardo Gandini, and Mario Davidovsky. (Sculpture Garden, 14 W. 54th St. Aug. 6-7 at 7:30. No tickets necessary.)

Bach in the Bronx—Eric Grossman, playing on Baroque violin, and Ilan Rechtman, playing harpsichord, embark on a three-week traversal of Bach's six sonatas for violin and keyboard. (Le Refuge Inn, 620 City Island Ave., the Bronx. Aug. 8 at 11:30 A.M. For information, call 1-718 885-2478.)

Bronx Arts Ensemble—Soong Fu Yuan conducts his own "The Little Fox" (with Robert Sherman narrating), as well as works by Haydn and Heinrich Hofmann. (Rockwood Drive Circle, Van Cortlandt Park, the Bronx. Aug. 8 at 2. . . . ¶ McGinley Center, Fordham University, Bronx Rose Hill Campus. Aug. 8 at 4. No tickets necessary for either concert. For rain-date information, call 1-718 549-1899.)

Ilan Rechtman and Barbara Mort—Performing a salon concert of music for piano, four hands, by Clementi, Dvořák, and Debussy. (Hotel Wales, Madison Ave. at 92nd St. Aug. 8 at 6. For information about tickets, call 876-6000.)

OUT OF TOWN

Glimmerglass Opera—"Le Comte Ory." (Aug. 5 at 8.) . . . ¶ "The Midnight Angel," by David Carlson. (Aug. 6 at 8.) . . . ¶ "Werther." (Aug. 7 at 8 and Aug. 9 at 2.) . . . ¶ "Così fan Tutte." (Aug. 8 at 2.) (Cooperstown, N.Y. For information about tickets, call 1-607 547-2255. English supertitles at all performances. Through Aug. 16.)

Caramoor Music Festival—Aug. 5 at 8:30: Cellist Yo-Yo Ma and pianist André Previn perform the American première of Mr. Previn's Cello Sonata, in addition to sonatas by Shostakovich and Brahms (in F Major, Op. 99). . . . ¶ Aug. 6 at 8:30: The Cassatt String Quartet plays quartets by Beethoven (in D Major, Op. 18, No. 3), Debussy, and Brahms (in B-Flat, Op. 67). . . . ¶ Aug. 7 at 8:30: A crossover concert, with clarinettist Richard Stoltzman, bassist Eddie Gomez, and keyboard player Bill Douglas. . . . ¶ Aug. 8 at 5:30: Garrick Ohlsson performs piano sonatas by Beethoven (in E Major, Op. 109, and in F Minor, Op. 57) and several works by Chopin (including his rarely played "Introduction and Variations in B-Flat"). (Katonah, N.Y. 1-914 232-1252.)

Tanglewood—Aug. 5 at 8:30: An all-American program in which baritone Thomas Hampson will perform songs by Foster, Ives, and others; with pianist Craig Rutenberg and the Jay Ungar trio. . . . ¶ Aug. 6 at 8:30: Seiji Ozawa leads the Boston Symphony in Tchaikovsky's Symphony No. 6 and Beethoven's Piano Concerto No. 4, featuring pianist Maria Tipo. Following four heavily booked seasons in the late nineteen-fifties, Ms. Tipo withdrew for three decades from concertizing in America. During this respite, her reputation nevertheless remained high, thanks in part to her disciplined recordings of classic repertoire (including all sixty-seven of Clementi's piano sonatas), and since her return to this continent two years ago she has been warmly welcomed as a dear friend sorely missed. . . . ¶ Aug. 7 at 8:30: David Zinman conducts the Boston Symphony in Mendelssohn's "Hebrides Overture," Violin Concerto (with Midori), and Symphony No. 4 (the "Italian"). . . . ¶ Aug. 8 at 2:30: Seiji Ozawa conducts the Boston Symphony in Mahler's Symphony No. 3; with mezzo-soprano Tatiana Troyanos, the Tanglewood Festival Chorus, and the Cantemus Children's Choir of Hungary. (Lenox, Mass. For information about tickets, call 1-413 637-1940.)

Aston Magna Festival—Handel's "Acis and Galatea," with soprano Nancy Armstrong, tenors Frank Kelley and William Hite, bass David Ripley, and a period-instrument chamber orchestra. (Bard College, Annandale-on-Hudson. Aug. 6 at 8. For information about tickets, call 1-914 758-7425. . . . ¶ St. James Church, Great Barrington, Mass. Aug. 7 at 6. For information about tickets, call 1-413 528-3595.)

Norfolk Chamber Music Festival—Final concerts of the season. Aug. 6 at 8:30: The Cleveland String Quartet plays quartets by Haydn (in D Major, Op. 76, No. 5) and Brahms (in A Minor, Op. 51, No. 2), plus (with the assistance of John Swallow) the première of Joan Tower's Elegy for Trombone and String Quartet (subtitled, with a nod towards Tennyson, ". . . forgive these wild and wandering cries . . ."). . . . ¶ Aug. 7 at 8:30: Sidney Harth conducts the Norfolk Chamber Orchestra in Hindemith's "Kammermusik No. 1," Mozart's C-Minor Piano Concerto (with Boris Berman), and Beethoven's Symphony No. 2. (Route 44, Norfolk, Conn. For information about tickets, call 1-203 542-3000.)

Maverick Concerts—The Mozart String Trio plays Beethoven's C-Minor Trio (Op. 9, No. 3) and D-Major Serenade (Op. 8), as well as Schubert's Trio in B-Flat. (Woodstock, N.Y. Aug. 8 at 3. For information about tickets, call 1-914 679-8217.)

JAZZ/POP/ROCK PERSONAL APPEARANCES

New Order—Well into its second decade, the definitive techno-rock band New Order has become something of an institution. They've managed, without any discernible charisma, to become enormously successful, churning out irresistible dance-floor manna mixed with lyrics full of misery and despair. But unlike Depeche Mode, the Cure, and Siouxsie and the Banshees, who all began more or less around the same time and share the same alienated fan base, New Order has never cared much for image or eyeliner. "Republic," their seventh release, following a four-year hiatus, offers more of what New Order is famous for, but the band has recently been photographed smiling, and vocalist Barney Sumner finally seems comfortable with his distinctive voice—a sort of whimper, like someone whispering in your ear. (Meadowlands Arena. 1-201 935-3900. Aug. 4 at 7:30.)

Classical Jazz—An annual series at Lincoln Center. "Lady Day: *The Many Faces of Billie Holiday*," a talk and slide show by Robert O'Meally, who wrote a biography of the singer. (Bruno Walter Auditorium, New York Public Library for the Performing Arts. Aug. 4 at 6. No tickets necessary.) . . . ¶ "New Orleans Jazz on Film"; Michael White is the host. (Walter Reade Theatre, 165 W. 65th St., plaza level. Aug. 5 at 7 and 9. For information about tickets, call 875-5050.) . . . ¶ "Battle Royale": Lincoln Center holds a cutting contest, that fabled jazz ritual where art, ego, and testosterone meet. Unlike a jam session, where camaraderie reigns, the cutting contest is a blood sport. Here the opponents span the generations: Bebop trumpet giant Red Rodney—once brave enough to stand beside Charlie Parker—will hold his own against brassy young'uns Wynton Marsalis, Roy Hargrove, Wallace Roney, and Nicholas Payton. On tenor saxophone, the mighty George Coleman (who made his bones in the late fifties and sixties with the Max Roach and Miles Davis bands) takes on the avant-leaning David Murray, new star Joshua Redman, and Don Braden. Only the strong will survive. (Alice Tully Hall. 875-5050. Aug. 6 at 8.) . . . ¶ The Geri Allen septet and the Marcus Roberts nonet. (Alice Tully Hall. Aug. 7 at 8.) . . . ¶ The Lincoln Center Jazz Orchestra, conducted by David Berger, in works by Duke Ellington. (Alice Tully Hall. Aug. 8 at 8.)

The Four Tops and the Temptations—The current revival of melodic harmony in R. & B. makes this pairing of great Motown vocal groups less of an oldies show than a master class in the golden age of Motor City soul. From the Tops' "Standing in the Shadows of Love" to the Temps' "I Can't Get Next to You," it promises to be a lesson in pleasure. (Radio City Music Hall, Sixth Ave. at 50th St. 247-4777. Aug. 6 at 8.)

Jacquet Plays Hawkins—Coleman Hawkins was the father of the jazz tenor saxophone; Illinois Jacquet is the last of Hawkins' original brood from the thirties still playing at the peak of his powers. For this tribute to the Hawk, Jacquet leaves his bruising big band behind and scales down to a quartet setting. All the better. Unencumbered, Jacquet can coat the atmosphere with plush tones known only to the older masters. The setting couldn't be more perfect or symbolic: a sculpture garden strewn with mythological beasts and angels rescued from the façades of long-gone New York buildings—resilient urban beauty, not to be overlooked. (Frieda Schiff Warburg Memorial Sculpture Garden, Brooklyn Museum, Eastern Parkway. Aug. 8 at 3. Tickets at the museum on the day of the concert.)

Eddie Palmieri's Latin Jazz Orchestra—Museum of Modern Art, 11 W. 53rd St. 708-9500. Aug. 5 at 7 and 9.

Allman Brothers Band—Jones Beach Theatre. 1-516 221-1000. Aug. 6 at 8.

Joan Baez—With Jimmie Dale Gilmore. (Central Park SummerStage, Rumsey Playfield, mid-Park at 72nd St. Aug. 7 at 3. No tickets necessary.)

Tabou Combo—With Lakol. (Central Park SummerStage. Aug. 8 at 3. No tickets necessary.)

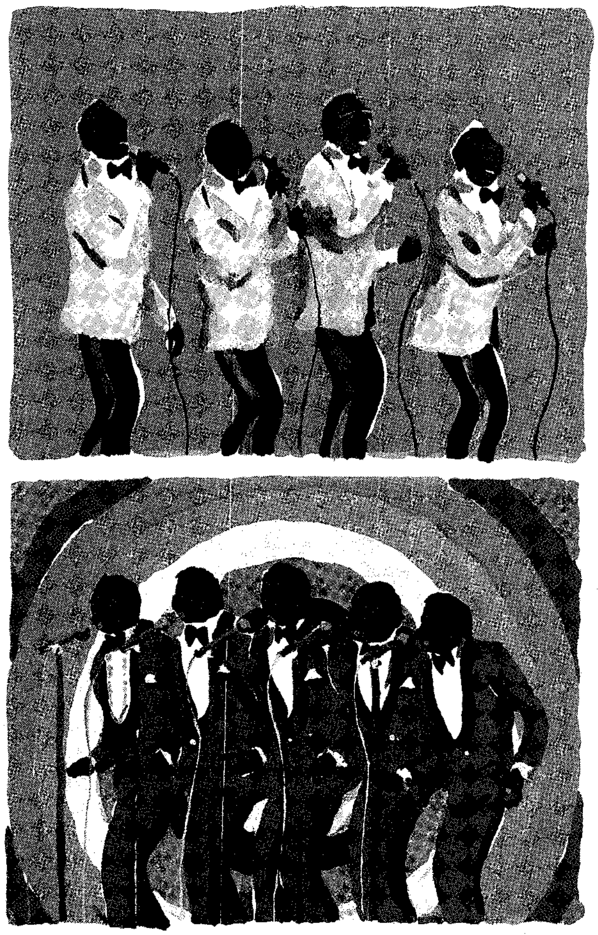
The H.O.R.D.E. Festival—Big Head Todd & the Monsters, Blues Traveler, the Samples, Widespread Panic, Allgood, and Aquarium Rescue Unit. (Jones Beach Theatre. Aug. 8 at 6.)

Blues Concert—B. B. King, Buddy Guy, the Alligator All-Stars (Koko Taylor, Lonnie Brooks, and Junior Wells), and Eric Johnson. (Paramount, Madison Square Garden. 465-6000. Aug. 10 at 7:30.)

SPORTS

Sweet Spot

Meet Hair Jordan. She's a rat. So's Rat Ewing. They're out at the new Science of Sports exhibit at the New York Hall of Science, slam-dunkin' every ball they can get their paws on, helping Stretch Lindner prove a point. Every time they put the ball through the hoop, they get a treat, thus illustrating the psychological theory of positive reinforcement. Lindner, who's human, and who can, among other things, make a bowling ball bounce higher than a basketball, is the exhibit manager and travelling demonstrator, and he's the guy who drafted Hair and Rat.



The Four Tops and the Temptations at Radio City Music Hall.

Built as part of the 1964 World's Fair, the New York Hall of Science makes a practice of linking science with unusual partners. Most recently, its cathedral-like exhibit space, which has eighty-foot-high curved concrete walls studded with chunks of cobalt-blue stained glass, housed an exhibit of kinetic sculpture. The current show is designed to help sports fans put a scientific name to what they already know. In the Hall's locker room, for example, you see that a catcher's cleat has an extra anchor to enable him to shift his center of gravity suddenly and not fall over. A mallet with which you tap a Louisville Slugger helps you locate the bat's sweet spot, where force is most efficiently transferred to the ball instead of being wasted in vibration. Visitors can measure their reaction time, their peripheral vision, and the speed of their fastball. The museum is within walking distance of Shea Stadium, and, given the Mets' bullpen this season, there's a good chance Dallas Green will be hanging out near the pitching area. Who knows? You might get discovered. (New York Hall of Science, Flushing Meadow Park.)

HOME TEAMS

Yankees—Vs. the Toronto Blue Jays, Aug. 4 at 7:30 and Aug. 5 at 1.

Mets—Vs. the Pittsburgh Pirates, Aug. 6 at 7:40, Aug. 7 at 1:05, and Aug. 8 at 1:40. . . . ¶ Vs. the Atlanta Braves, Aug. 10 at 7:40.

(The Yankees play at Yankee Stadium, 1-718 293-6000, and the Mets play at Shea Stadium, 1-718 507-8499.)

ABOVE AND BEYOND

Green Thumbs in the City—City gardeners will have a chance to learn about home gardening from the experts at the New York Botanical Garden. On Aug. 7-8, from 11 to 4, there will be demonstrations in developing a wildlife garden, a cutting garden, a fragrance garden, a vegetable garden, and a garden garden. In addition, a plant doctor will dispense advice about failing flora. (Bronx Park. No charge beyond garden contribution.)

Jazzy Harlem—Harlem Week '93 is under way. Aug. 4, from 7 to 9: A jazzmobile, with the Lou Donaldson quintet, will set up camp on the south side of Grant's Tomb. (Riverside Dr. at 122nd St.) On the north side, there will be a bazaar of ethnic food and crafts venders. . . . From 7 to 11: Apollo Theatre Amateur Night. (253 W. 125th St. 749-5838.) . . . ¶ Aug. 7, from 1 to 7: A street fair with Latin jazz and dance. (102nd St. between Park and Madison Aves.) . . . From 1 to 7: Blues and R. & B., along with a fashion show. (126th St. between Malcolm X and Adam Clayton Powell Blvds.) . . . ¶ Aug. 8, from noon to 7:30: Gospel picnic. (Grant's Tomb.) . . . At 1: The 92nd Street Y is offering a tour of Harlem. (For more information, call 996-1100.) The festival will continue through Aug. 17.

Outings—Lincoln Center continues its annual Out-of-Doors series of dance and music performances, with a dash of carnival excitement thrown in for good measure. A partial schedule: Aug. 4 at 6:30: Anthony Davis and Episteme (contemporary chamber music). . . . At 8:15: The Bill T. Jones/Arnie Zane Dance Company. . . . ¶ Aug. 5 at 6:30: Vibester Milt Jackson. . . . ¶ Aug. 6 at 8:15: The Trisha Brown Company (dance). . . . ¶ Aug. 7 at 1: Hotfoot (tap dance). . . . At 2: Ladyfingers (juggling). . . . At 3 and 4: Clowns. . . . ¶ Aug. 8 at 2: Peking opera. . . . At 4:30: Formosa Aboriginal Dance Troupe of Taiwan. . . . At 8:15: A tribute to Ismael Rivera (Caribbean music). . . . ¶ Aug. 10 at 8:15: Montreal Danse. (All events will take place in the environs of Lincoln Center. 875-5400. The festival will continue through Aug. 24. No tickets necessary.)

Plimpton in Limbo—Author, editor, and bon vivant George Plimpton will read selections from his nonfiction. (Limbo, 47 Avenue A, at 4th St. Aug. 10 at 7. No tickets necessary.)

Tour—Big Onion Walking Tours will immigrate to Ellis Island. (Aug. 7 at noon. For more information, call 439-1090.)

JEAN-PHILIPPE DELHOMME

GOINGS ON ABOUT TOWN

THE MOVIE HOUSES

S	M	T	W	T	F	S
			4	5	6	7
8	9	10				

FILMS ACCOMPANIED BY A DAGGER ARE DESCRIBED IN "MOVIES IN BRIEF," STARTING ON PAGE 21.

EAST SIDE

Angelika Film Center, 18 W. Houston St. (995-2000)
Theatre 1: "Amongst Friends" (directed by Rob Weiss).
Theatre 2: "Much Ado About Nothing" (Kenneth Branagh).
Theatre 3: "Orlando" (Sally Potter).
Theatre 4: "Strictly Ballroom" (Baz Luhrmann).
Theatre 5: "Like Water for Chocolate" (Alfonso Arau, in Spanish).
Theatre 6: "The Wedding Banquet" (Ang Lee).

Little Theatre, Public Theatre, 425 Lafayette St. (598-7171)
"Where Are We? Our Trip Through America" (Rob Epstein and Jeffrey Friedman).

Newman Theatre, Public Theatre, 425 Lafayette St. (598-7171)
A program of Italian films.

Movieland 8th Street Triplex, 36 E. 8th. (477-6600)
Theatre 1: "Sleepless in Seattle" (†).
Theatre 2: "Robin Hood: Men in Tights" (Mel Brooks), with Cary Elwes.
Theatre 3: "Sleepless in Seattle" (†).

Village Theatre VII, 3rd Ave. at 11th. (982-0400)
Theatre 1: "In the Line of Fire" (†).
Theatre 2: "The Firm" (†).
Theatre 3: Through Aug. 5: "What's Love Got to Do with It" (Brian Gibson), with Angela Bassett and Laurence Fishburne. From Aug. 6: "My Boyfriend's Back" (Bob Balaban).
Theatre 4: "So I Married an Axe Murderer" (†).
Theatre 5: "In the Line of Fire" (†).
Theatre 6: "Free Willy" (Simon Wincer).
Theatre 7: (Matinées only) "Tom and Jerry—The Movie" (Phil Roman), an animated film; and (evenings only) "The Firm" (†).

Cinema Village, 22 E. 12th. (924-3363)
"Tokyo Decadence" (Ryu Murakami).

Village East Cinemas, 2nd Ave. at 12th. (529-6799)
Theatre 1: "Un Coeur en Hiver" (Claude Sautet, in French).
Theatre 2: "Boys' Shorts: The New Queer Cinema," a program of six short films.
Theatre 3: "Another Stakeout" (†).
Theatre 4: Through Aug. 5: (Matinées only) "Snow White and the Seven Dwarfs" (1937); and (evenings only) "Chain of Desire" (Temistocles Lopez). From Aug. 6: "The Meteor Man" (Robert Townsend), with Townsend.
Theatre 5: "Hocus Pocus" (†).
Theatre 6: "The Story of Qiu Ju" (Zhang Yimou; in Mandarin).
Theatre 7: "Hold Me, Thrill Me, Kiss Me" (Joel Hershman).

19th Street East 6, B'way at 19th. (260-8000)
Theatre 1: "The Firm" (†).
Theatre 2: "Sleepless in Seattle" (†).
Theatre 3: "Poetic Justice" (†).
Theatre 4: "The Firm" (†).
Theatre 5: "Coneheads" (†).
Theatre 6: "Another Stakeout" (†).

Bay Cinema, 2nd Ave. at 32nd. (679-0160)
"In the Line of Fire" (†).

Murray Hill Cinemas, 160 E. 34th. (689-6548)
Theatre 1: "So I Married an Axe Murderer" (†).
Theatre 2: Through Aug. 5: "What's Love Got to Do with It" (Brian Gibson), with Angela Bassett and Laurence Fishburne. From Aug. 6: "The Meteor Man" (Robert Townsend), with Townsend.
Theatre 3: "Another Stakeout" (†).
Theatre 4: "Poetic Justice" (†).

34th Street Showplace, 238 E. 34th. (532-5544)
Theatre 1: "Coneheads" (†).
Theatre 2: "The Firm" (†).
Theatre 3: "Sleepless in Seattle" (†).

34th St. East, 241 E. 34th. (683-0255)
"Robin Hood: Men in Tights" (Mel Brooks).

Eastside Playhouse, 3rd Ave. at 55th. (755-3020)
"Like Water for Chocolate" (Alfonso Arau, in Spanish).

Sutton 1 and 2, 3rd Ave. at 57th. (759-1411)
Theatre 1: "Hocus Pocus" (†).
Theatre 2: "Snow White and the Seven Dwarfs" (1937).

Gotham Cinema, 3rd Ave. at 58th. (759-2262)
"Robin Hood: Men in Tights" (Mel Brooks).

Plaza, 42 E. 58th. (355-3320)
"Rookie of the Year" (Daniel Stern).

Manhattan Twin, 3rd Ave. at 59th. (935-6420)
Theatre 1: "Poetic Justice" (†).
Theatre 2: Through Aug. 5: "Poetic Justice" (†). From Aug. 6: "The Meteor Man" (Robert Townsend), with Townsend.

59th Street East Cinema, 239 E. 59th. (759-4630)
(Matinées only) "Tom and Jerry—The Movie" (Phil Roman); and (evenings only) "Benefit of the Doubt" (Jonathan Heap), with Amy Irving and Donald Sutherland.

Baronet and Coronet, 3rd Ave. at 59th. (355-1663)
Theatre 1: "Rising Sun" (†).
Theatre 2: "Rising Sun" (†).

Cinema I, Cinema II, and Cinema 3rd Avenue, 3rd Ave. at 60th. (753-6022)
Theatre 1: "Another Stakeout" (†).
Theatre 2: Through Aug. 5: "What's Love Got to Do with It" (Brian Gibson), with Angela Bassett and Laurence Fishburne. From Aug. 6: "House of Angels" (Colin Nutley, in Swedish).
Theatre 3: "Menace II Society" (Allen and Albert Hughes).

Art East Cinema, 1st Ave. at 61st. (644-1111)
Through Aug. 5: "Dave" (Ivan Reitman).
From Aug. 6: To be announced.

First & 62nd Cinemas, 400 E. 62nd. (752-4600)
Theatre 1: "Jurassic Park" (†).
Theatre 2: "Much Ado About Nothing" (Kenneth Branagh).
Theatre 3: "Jurassic Park" (†).
Theatre 4: "Coneheads" (†).
Theatre 5: "So I Married an Axe Murderer" (†).
Theatre 6: "So I Married an Axe Murderer" (†).

Gemini 1 and 2, 2nd Ave. at 64th. (832-1670)
Theatre 1: Through Aug. 5: "Cliffhanger" (Renny Harlin), with Sylvester Stallone. From Aug. 6: "The Fugitive" (Andrew Davis), with Harrison Ford and Tommy Lee Jones.
Theatre 2: Through Aug. 5: "Weekend at Bernie's 2" (Robert Klane). From Aug. 6: "The Fugitive."

Beekman, 2nd Ave. at 66th. (737-2622)
"Sleepless in Seattle" (†).

New York Twin, 2nd Ave. at 67th. (744-7339)
Theatre 1: "In the Line of Fire" (†).
Theatre 2: "Free Willy" (Simon Wincer).

68th St. Playhouse, 3rd Ave. at 68th. (734-0302)
"Amongst Friends" (Rob Weiss).

Tower East, 3rd Ave. at 71st. (879-1313)
"The Firm" (†).

East 85th Street, 1st Ave. at 85th. (249-5100)
"The Firm" (†).

Park & 86th Street Cinemas, 125 E. 86th. (534-1880)
Theatre 1: "Jurassic Park" (†).
Theatre 2: "In the Line of Fire" (†).

Orpheum VII, 3rd Ave. at 86th. (876-2400)
Theatre 1: "So I Married an Axe Murderer" (†).
Theatre 2: "Sleepless in Seattle" (†).
Theatre 3: "Rising Sun" (†).
Theatre 4: "Free Willy" (Simon Wincer).
Theatre 5: "Coneheads" (†).
Theatre 6: (Matinées only) "Tom and Jerry—The Movie" (Phil Roman), an animated film; and (evenings only) "Poetic Justice" (†).
Theatre 7: "Poetic Justice" (†).

86th Street East Twin, 3rd Ave. at 86th. (249-1144)
Theatre 1: Through Aug. 5: "Hocus Pocus" (†). From Aug. 6: "The Meteor Man" (Robert Townsend), with Townsend.
Theatre 2: "Another Stakeout" (†).

WEST SIDE

Film Forum, 209 W. Houston St. (727-8110)
Theatre 1: "Forbidden Love: The Unashamed Stories of Lesbian Lives" (directed by Aerlyn Weissman and Lynne Fernie).
Theatre 2: See listings under Revival Houses.
Theatre 3: "La Vie de Bohème" (†).

Waverly 1 and 2, 6th Ave. at 3rd. (929-8037)
Theatre 1: "Coneheads" (†).
Theatre 2: "Poetic Justice" (†).

Art Greenwich Twin, Greenwich Ave. at 12th. (929-3350)
Theatre 1: "Jurassic Park" (†).
Theatre 2: "Rising Sun" (†).

Quad Cinema, 34 W. 13th. (255-8800)
Theatre 1: "Visions of Light: The Art of Cinematography," a documentary.
Theatre 2: "Road Scholar" (Roger Weisberg).
Theatre 3: "For a Lost Soldier" (Roeland Kerbosch, in Dutch).
Theatre 4: "I'll Love You Forever . . . Tonight" (Edgar Michael Bravo).

Chelsea Cinemas, 260 W. 23rd. (691-4744)
Theatre 1: "What's Love Got to Do with It" (Brian Gibson), with Angela Bassett and Laurence Fishburne.
Theatre 2: "Jurassic Park" (†).
Theatre 3: "Free Willy" (Simon Wincer).
Theatre 4: "Rising Sun" (†).
Theatre 5: "In the Line of Fire" (†).
Theatre 6: "So I Married an Axe Murderer" (†).
Theatre 7: "Rising Sun" (†).
Theatre 8: "Robin Hood: Men in Tights" (Mel Brooks), with Cary Elwes.
Theatre 9: "In the Line of Fire" (†).

23rd St. West Triplex, 333 W. 23rd. (989-0060)
Theatre 1: "Hocus Pocus" (†).
Theatre 2: (Matinées only) "Tom and Jerry—The Movie" (Phil Roman), an animated film; and (evenings only) "Cliffhanger" (Renny Harlin), with Sylvester Stallone.
Theatre 3: Through Aug. 5: (Matinées only) "Snow White and the Seven Dwarfs" (1937); and (evenings only) "Rookie of the Year" (Daniel Stern). From Aug. 6: "My Boyfriend's Back" (Bob Balaban).

Guild, 33 W. 50th. (757-2406)
"In the Line of Fire" (†).

Worldwide Cinemas, 50th St. between 8th and 9th Aves. (246-1583)
Theatre 1: "Benefit of the Doubt" (Jonathan Heap), with Amy Irving and Donald Sutherland.
Theatre 2: "Rookie of the Year" (Daniel Stern).
Theatre 3: "Snow White and the Seven Dwarfs" (1937).
Theatre 4: "Dave" (Ivan Reitman), with Kevin Kline.
Theatre 5: "Indochine" (Régis Wargnier, in French), with Catherine Deneuve.
Theatre 6: (Matinées only) "Tom and Jerry—The Movie" (Phil Roman); and (evenings only) "Last Action Hero" (John McTiernan), with Arnold Schwarzenegger.

Ziegfeld, 141 W. 54th. (765-7600)
"Jurassic Park" (†).

Festival, 6 W. 57th. (307-7856)
(Matinées only) "Tom and Jerry—The Movie" (Phil Roman); and (evenings only) "Dave" (Ivan Reitman), with Kevin Kline.

57th St. Playhouse, 110 W. 57th. (581-7360)
"Coneheads" (†).

Carnegie Hall Cinemas, 7th Ave. between 56th and 57th. (265-2520)
Theatre 1: "Road Scholar" (Roger Weisberg).
Theatre 2: "Like Water for Chocolate" (Alfonso Arau, in Spanish).

Angelika 57, 225 W. 57th. (586-1900)
"Amongst Friends" (Rob Weiss).

Paris, 4 W. 58th. (980-5656)
"The Music of Chance" (†).

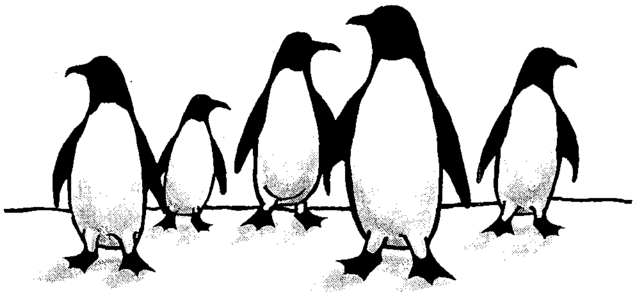
Cinema 3, 2 W. 59th. (752-5959)
"Strictly Ballroom" (Baz Luhrmann).

Columbus Circle, B'way at 61st. (247-5070)
"So I Married an Axe Murderer" (†).

62nd & Broadway, 62 W. 62nd. (265-7466)
"In the Line of Fire" (†).

Lincoln Plaza Cinemas, B'way at 63rd. (757-2280)
Theatre 1: "Much Ado About Nothing" (Kenneth Branagh).
Theatre 2: "Orlando" (Sally Potter).
Theatre 3: "Orlando."
Theatre 4: "The Wedding Banquet" (Ang Lee).
Theatre 5: "Guelwaar" (Ousmane Sembène; in French and Wolof).

SAGAFJORD'S SOUTH AMERICA, ANTARCTICA, AFRICA, AND ORIENT



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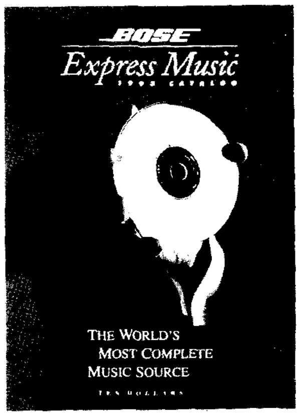

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MOVIE HOUSES–Cont'd

Theatre 6: "Un Coeur en Hiver" (Claude Sautet, in French).

Regency, B'way at 67th. (724-3700)
"Rising Sun" (†).

84th Street Sixplex, B'way at 84th. (877-3600)
Theatre 1: "Poetic Justice" (†).
Theatre 2: Through Aug. 5: "What's Love Got to Do with It" (Brian Gibson), with Angela Bassett and Laurence Fishburne. From Aug. 6: "My Boyfriend's Back" (Bob Balaban).
Theatre 3: "Sleepless in Seattle" (†).
Theatre 4: "Coneheads" (†).
Theatre 5: "The Firm" (†).
Theatre 6: "Free Willy" (Simon Wincer).

Metro Cinema 1 and 2, B'way at 99th. (222-1200
Theatre 1: "Robin Hood: Men in Tights (Mel Brooks), with Cary Elwes.
Theatre 2: "Jurassic Park" (†).

Olympia I and II, B'way at 107th. (865-8128)
Theatre 1: "Another Stakeout" (†).
Theatre 2: Through Aug. 5: (Matinées only) "Tom and Jerry—The Movie" (Phil Roman); and (evenings only) "Rookie of the Year" (Daniel Stern). From Aug. 6: "The Meteor Man" (Robert Townsend), with Townsend.

TIMES SQUARE AREA

Criterion Center, B'way at 44th. (354-0900)
Theatre 1: Through Aug. 5: "Menace II Society" (directed by Allen and Albert Hughes). From Aug. 6: "The Meteor Man" (Robert Townsend), with Townsend.
Theatre 2: "Free Willy" (Simon Wincer).
Theatre 3: "Cliffhanger" (Renny Harlin).
Theatre 4: "Sleepless in Seattle" (†).
Theatre 5: Through Aug. 5: "Weekend at Bernie's 2" (Robert Klane). From Aug. 6: "The Fugitive" (Andrew Davis), with Harrison Ford and Tommy Lee Jones.
Theatre 6: Through Aug. 5: "Rising Sun" (†). From Aug. 6: "The Fugitive."
Theatre 7: "Rising Sun" (†).

Embassy 1, B'way at 46th. (302-0494)
"Another Stakeout" (†).

Embassy 2, 3, and 4, 7th Ave. at 47th. (730-7262)
Theatre 1: "In the Line of Fire" (†).
Theatre 2: "Coneheads" (†).
Theatre 3: Through Aug. 5: "What's Love Got to Do with It" (Brian Gibson), with Angela Bassett and Laurence Fishburne. From Aug. 6: "My Boyfriend's Back" (Bob Balaban).

Astor Plaza, 44th St. at B'way. (869-8340)
"The Firm" (†).

National Twin, B'way at 44th. (869-0950)
Theatre 1: "Poetic Justice" (†).
Theatre 2: "Robin Hood: Men in Tights" (Mel Brooks), with Cary Elwes.

REVIVAL HOUSES

Film Forum 2, 209 W. Houston St. (727-8110)
Through Aug. 5: Three Mario Bava films.
Aug. 6-10: "The Man with the Golden Arm" (see page 21).

Gramercy, Lexington at 23rd. (475-1660)
Through Aug. 7: "Apocalypse Now" (†); and "Hearts of Darkness: A Filmmaker's Apocalypse" (1991, directed by Fax Bahr and George Hickenlooper), a documentary about the making of "Apocalypse Now."
From Aug. 8: "A Place in the Sun" (1951, George Stevens), with Montgomery Clift and Elizabeth Taylor; and "Cat on a Hot Tin Roof" (195[illegible] Richard Brooks), with Taylor and Paul Newman.

Thalia, B'way at 95th. (316-4962)
Through Aug. 5: "A Place in the Sun" (1951, George Stevens), with Montgomery Clift and Elizabeth Taylor; and "Wild River" (1960, Elia Kazan), with Clift and Lee Remick.
Aug. 6-8: "Dark Victory" (1938, Edmund Goulding) and "Now, Voyager" (1942, Irving Rapper), both with Bette Davis.
From Aug. 9: "Swamp Water" (1941, Jean Renoir), with Dana Andrews; and "The Southerner" (1945, Renoir), with Zachary Scott and Betty Field.

Theatre 80 St. Marks, 80 St. Marks Pl. (254-7400)
Aug. 4: "Days of Heaven" (1978, Terrence Malick), with Richard Gere; and "An Officer and a Gentleman" (†).

Aug. 5: "Hush . . . Hush, Sweet Charlotte" (1965, Robert Aldrich), with Bette Davis; and "What Ever Happened to Baby Jane?" (1962, Aldrich), with Davis and Joan Crawford.

Aug. 6-7: "Five Easy Pieces" (1970, Bob Rafelson) and "The King of Marvin Gardens" (1972, Rafelson), both with Jack Nicholson.

Aug. 8: "O Lucky Man!" (1973, Lindsay Anderson), with Malcolm McDowell.

Aug. 9: "Face to Face" (1976, Ingmar Bergman; in Swedish) and "Autumn Sonata" (1978, Bergman; in Swedish).

Aug. 10: "Victim" (1961, Basil Dearden), with Dirk Bogarde; and "Peeping Tom" (1960, Michael Powell), with Karl Boehm.

FILM LIBRARIES, ETC.

Museum of Modern Art, Roy and Niuta Titus Theatres, 11 W. 53rd St. (708-9480)—A program of films from Mexico and other Latin-American countries.

Walter Reade Theatre, Lincoln Center, 165 W. 65th St., plaza level. (875-5600)—Aug. 7-8 at 2: "Never Cry Wolf" (†). . . . ¶ Through Aug. 10: A program of new films from Mexico.

American Museum of the Moving Image, 35th Ave. at 36th St., Astoria. (1-718 784-0077)—Aug. 6 at 7:30, Aug. 7 at 4:30, and Aug. 8 at 2 and 4:30: Four different programs of films by George Kuchar, who will be present at each showing. . . . ¶ Aug. 7 at 2: "King Kong" (1932, Merian C. Cooper and Ernest B. Schoedsack), with Fay Wray, Robert Armstrong, and Bruce Cabot.

Florence Gould Hall, 55 E. 59th St. (355-6160)—Aug. 4 at 12:30 and 6: ". . . And God Created Woman" (1956, Roger Vadim; in French), with Brigitte Bardot. . . . ¶ Aug. 4 at 3:15 and 8:45: "Such a Gorgeous Kid Like Me" (1973, François Truffaut; in French), with Bernadette Lafont.

Cathedral of St. John the Divine, Amsterdam Ave. at 112th St. (662-2133)—Aug. 4 at 8: "The Gaucho" (1928, F. Richard Jones; silent), with Douglas Fairbanks and Lupe Velez. (Organ accompaniment written and played by Lee Erwin.)

Bryant Park, Sixth Ave. at 41st St. (982-4142)—Mondays, starting at dusk, free, drive-in-style moviegoing, beginning with Looney Tunes cartoons, coming attractions, and an onscreen clock that counts down the minutes until the feature begins. Aug. 9: "King Kong" (1932, Merian C. Cooper and Ernest B. Schoedsack), with Fay Wray, Robert Armstrong, and Bruce Cabot.

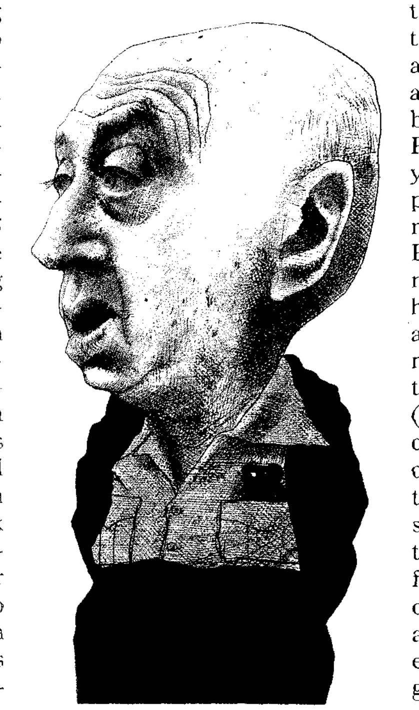
Symphony Space, B'way at 95th St. (864-5400)—Aug. 5 at 7:30: "Breathless" (1959, Jean-Luc Godard; in French), with Jean Seberg and Jean-Paul Belmondo. . . . ¶ Aug. 5 at 9:15: "My Life to Live" (1962, Godard; in French), with Anna Karina. . . . ¶ Aug. 6 at 7:30: "Smiles of a Summer Night" (1955, Ingmar Bergman; in Swedish). . . . ¶ Aug. 6 at 9:30: "The Seventh Seal" (1956, Bergman; in Swedish). . . . ¶ Aug. 7 at 7: "Black Lizard" (1968, Kinji Fukasaku; in Japanese). . . . ¶ Aug. 7 at 8:45: "An Actor's Revenge" (1963, Kon Ichikawa; in Japanese). . . . ¶ Aug. 8 at 3: "Marius" (†). . . . ¶ Aug. 8 at 5:30: "Fanny" (1932, Marc Allégret and Pierre Prévert; in French). . . . ¶ Aug. 8 at 8: "César" (1936, Marcel Pagnol; in French).

MOVIES IN BRIEF

**SEE PRECEDING PAGES FOR THEATRE ADDRESSES AND TELEPHONE NUMBERS.
IF A MOVIE HAS BEEN REVIEWED IN "THE CURRENT CINEMA"
DURING THE PAST TWO YEARS, THE DATE OF ITS REVIEW IS GIVEN.**

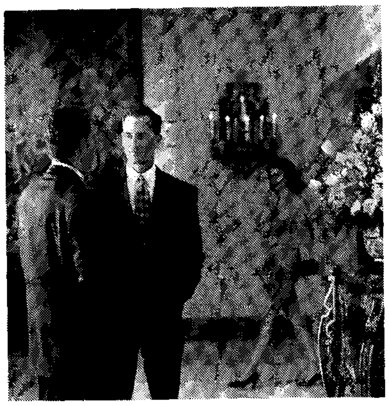
Golden Blue Eyes

IN the fifties, the flamboyant Otto Preminger (the subject of a retrospective at Film Forum 2) took the clout he had earned making moody thrillers for big studios and used it to mount ambitious independent movies. When applied to controversial properties, his melodramatic flair could produce compelling results, such as his 1955 "The Man with the Golden Arm" (playing August 6-10). Preminger's portrait of an addict dilutes the gutter wisdom of the original novel (by Nelson Algren) yet achieves its own stylized theatrical power—largely through brilliant casting. Frank Sinatra is Frankie Machine, a hot-shot poker dealer and junkie who emerges from prison hoping to kick all his bad habits (heroin included) and earn a living as a drummer. Everything Sinatra does here is electrically nuanced, as if Preminger had hot-wired the star's eyes, vocal cords, and facial muscles to the circuitry of Frankie Machine's brain. Sinatra adjusts persuasively when Machine moves between two women—this antihero is wary and solicitous with his agitated, wheelchair-bound wife (Eleanor Parker), naked and yearning with his sympathetic downstairs neighbor (Kim Novak). Parker's florid staginess suits the part of a hysterical put-on artist, and Novak has a lovely, melancholy presence that gives the addict (and the film) a patch of peace. She holds her own with Sinatra in the terrifying cold-turkey sequence, where he alternates adrenalized frenzy with physical collapse. Sinatra taps a raw power that rarely enters into his musical genius. He never gave a better performance as an actor.



JOHN SPRING

Otto Preminger.



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IN BRIEF—Cont'd

(The following notes are by Pauline Kael, Anthony Lane, Terrence Rafferty, and Michael Sragow.)

Another Stakeout—Only the size of the opening explosion and the number of good actors stuck in nothing parts distinguish this slapstick cop movie from brain-dead episodic television. With the same director (John Badham) and writer (Jim Kouf) as the 1987 hit "Stakeout," it once again features Richard Dreyfuss and Emilio Estevez in the roles of flip Seattle cops. But their generation-gap chemistry turns smarmy as they waste their energy putting down their temp boss, an assistant district attorney played by Rosie O'Donnell, who's a liability for any movie. She's opaque, one-note, and forced—a female James Belushi. On the current stakeout, O'Donnell's maladroit Ms. D.A. poses as Dreyfuss's wife and Estevez's stepmom. Badham and Kouf try to lampoon retro notions of female domesticity and male knowhow, but end up exploiting them. Madeleine Stowe, who introduced Dreyfuss to romance in the first film, pops up (uncredited) for an occasional argument. With Cathy Moriarty, Miguel Ferrer, John Rubinstein, Marcia Strassman, and Dennis Farina.—M.S. (Village East Cinemas, 19th Street East 6, Murray Hill Cinemas, Cinema I, 86th Street East Twin, Olympia, and Embassy 1.)

Harrison Ford in "The Fugitive."

Apocalypse Now (1979)—Francis Ford Coppola's transposition of Joseph Conrad's "Heart of Darkness" achieves a truly epic emptiness. It's Vietnam as the Inferno, with a psychedelic swirl of helicopters, napalm, smoke—and equally gassy epigrams. A random attack on a tiny Vietcong village has an entire air-cavalry squadron supporting it, and a quartet of needle-nosed jets finishes the job with napalm. The firepower is stupendous, its force heightened even further by the "Ride of the Valkyries" on the soundtrack. Marlon Brando's Kurtz, the madman who has carved out his own kingdom in the Cambodian jungle, is seen in half-light and heard in half-whispers. It's hard to resist feeling that you're in the presence of something profound, or at least deep, or at the very least meaningful. This is one big bully of a movie that can blow your mind if you're impressionable enough, but not for a moment expand it. As the military hit man on Kurtz's trail, Martin Sheen gets lost in the superproduction, but some of the other actors come through, including Frederic Forrest and the fourteen-year-old Larry Fishburne as members of Sheen's crew, Dennis Hopper as a deranged photojournalist, and Robert ("I love the smell of napalm in the morning") Duvall as a Patton-like ramrod. Cinematography by Vittorio Storaro.—M.S. (Gramercy; through Aug. 7.)

Coneheads—High brows and low comedy blend in this clever extension of the Conehead sketches from "Saturday Night Live." The director, Steve Barron, brings deadpan goofiness and crisp visual charm to the tale of a cone-domed husband and wife from the planet Remulak, who crash-land in the East River, have a daughter, settle down in New Jersey, and pretend to be from France. (The parents are, as always, Dan Aykroyd and Jane Curtin; the fizzy Michelle Burke is their rebellious teen-ager.) The movie is a series of riffs on immigration and naturalization. Hiding out from I.N.S. honcho Michael McKean and his suck-up underling (the hilariously fey David Spade), the supercompetent Coneheads assume the coloration of the suburban American middle class—and turn illegal-alien stereotypes on their pointy heads. Conehead argot veers between hyperrational definitions ("pizza" is "starch disk") and nonsense talk ("whore" is "flarthag"). It has a silly catchiness, as do the pop-culture references and sight gags. The cameo appearances by late-night TV comics are variable in quality, but Dave Thomas boasts a gas-bag grandeur as Remulak's Highmaster. All in all, it's a pick-me-up.—M.S. (19th Street East 6, 34th Street Showplace, First & 62nd Cinemas, Orpheum VII, Waverly, 57th St. Playhouse, 84th Street Sixplex, and Embassy.)

The Firm—That Cub Scout of superstars Tom Cruise is perfectly cast as the go-getting, white-bread hero of John Grisham's tale of chicanery and murder in a hoity-toity Memphis law firm. The director, Sydney Pollack, and his usual phalanx of screenwriters (Robert Towne, David Rayfiel, and David Rabe get script credit) try to improve on their source—and only partially succeed. The clunky plot continues to be riddled with implausibilities, and the movie runs a slack two hours and thirty-four minutes. But Pollack and his team do come up with a more logical line of action and give the hero and his wife (the sexy, skeptical Jeanne Tripplehorn) a smidgen of self-awareness. And they soup up the side characters. Holly Hunter, Gary Busey, Ed Harris, David Strathairn, and Wilford Brimley do themselves proud, and Gene Hackman is in a class by himself, brewing unprecedented mixtures of moral dry rot, fellow feeling, and animal vitality.—M.S. (Village Theatre VII, 19th Street East 6, 34th Street Showplace, Tower East, East 85th Street, 84th Street Sixplex, and Astor Plaza.)

Hocus Pocus—Since funny-horrible witches have as much surefire appeal for kids as dinosaurs, it's a pity that Mick Garris and Neil Cuthbert, the screenwriters of this contemporary Halloween-in-Salem farce, aren't even at the sorcerer's-apprentice stage. Bette Midler, Kathy Najimy, and Sarah Jessica Parker, as evil sisters from the seventeenth century, do their damnedest to put some comic flesh on the skeletal plot. Midler, buck-toothed and imperious, gets a freaky chemistry going with the worshipful Najimy, who exists on the wisps of oxygen left in Midler's wake, while Parker flits around like a Valley Witch. But the movie is saddled with banal juvenile heroes (played by Omri Katz, Vinessa Shaw, and Thora Birch) and action that runs out of steam at the fifty-minute mark. Besides the unholy trio, the main source of fun is a talking cat. Kenny Ortega directed.—M.S. (Village East Cinemas, Sutton, and 23rd St. West Triplex. . . . ¶ 86th Street East Twin; through Aug. 5.)

In the Line of Fire—Clint Eastwood plays Frank Horrigan, a tired-looking middle-aged Secret Service agent who gets wind of a plot to kill the President and marshals his flagging powers in an attempt to stop the assassin (John Malkovich). It's a basic race against the clock: the good guy knows what the bad guy means to do; the villain's preparations and the hero's investigation run on separate tracks until they converge, like runaway trains, at the scene of the intended crime. The heroics are stirring, because the star's ravaged face and stiff, weary gestures tell us that everything Horrigan does costs him something, physically and emotionally. The director, Wolfgang Petersen, isn't a particularly imaginative or stylish filmmaker, but he delivers the goods, and in record time. Both Eastwood's performance and the movie itself have the quality of meat-and-potatoes genre-picture entertainment: nothing fancy, nothing unusual. The only hints of more exotic and unpredictable sensations come from Malkovich, who is threatening to become the most gloriously peculiar screen presence since the heyday of Alastair Sim. —T.R. (Reviewed in our issue of 7/12/93.) (Village Theatre VII, Bay Cinema, New York Twin, Park & 86th Street Cinemas, Chelsea Cinemas, Guild, 62nd & Broadway, and Embassy.)

Jurassic Park—Steven Spielberg's warm-blooded, state-of-the-art dinosaurs are a lot speedier than their nearest movie kin, the galumphing atomic-mutant monsters that crunched Japanese cities under their feet in the fifties and early sixties, and that enables the filmmaker to create dynamic stalk-and-chase sequences. But neither the carnivorous dinos nor the placid herbivores inspire anything close to awe, even with the aid of audience stimulants like surging symphonic music (by the shameless John Williams) and repeated closeups of wide-eyed, openmouthed actors. The screenplay, which is credited to Michael Crichton and David Koepp, reduces Crichton's intricately constructed novel to its bare bones: people running away from hungry animals. For all the ingenuity of the movie's engineering, "Jurassic Park" doesn't have the imagination—or the courage—to take us any place we haven't been a thousand times before. It's just a creature feature on amphetamines.—T.R. (6/28/93) (First & 62nd Cinemas, Park & 86th Street Cinemas, Art Greenwich Twin, Chelsea Cinemas, Ziegfeld, and Metro Cinema.)

Marius (1931)—The first film of the celebrated Marcel Pagnol trilogy. Static and visually unimaginative (Alexander Korda directed) but famous for its dialogue and characterization, and for the rich humanity Raimu brought to the role of César, the Marseilles café owner. In the film, the life along the harbor centers on this café. The story involves César's son, Marius (the elegant Pierre Fresnay, oddly miscast), who longs to go to sea, though he loves Fanny (Orane Démazis). Written by Pagnol. In French.—P.K. (Symphony Space; Aug. 8.)

The Music of Chance—Jim Nashe (Mandy Patinkin) is a mixture of tough guy and wandering spirit. On a country road he picks up Pozzi (James Spader), a gambler down on his luck. In one of the random, risky twists in which the film specializes, Nashe decides to help him out. They go to a lonely country house, inhabited by a pair of wealthy oddballs called Flower (Charles Durning) and Stone (Joel Grey), who trounce Pozzi at poker and then demand an unusual payment: he and Nashe must build a stone wall on the grounds. From here on the movie becomes an unlikely fable about power and freedom, as Nashe and Pozzi are put through their paces like creatures of an author's cruel fancy. Philip Haas does well to curb the pretentiousness in all this; he cuts Paul Auster's original novel back to the bone and toughens the progress of the plot. There's

TIM ROWER

nothing he can do about Spader's silly, unconvincing Pozzi, but Patinkin is a great help; he looks so grave and laid-back that you almost end up believing in the whole thing.—A.L. (6/7/93) (Paris.)

Never Cry Wolf (1983)—Adapted from Farley Mowat's autobiographical book, this Carroll Ballard film is about a young biologist (Charles Martin Smith) working for the Canadian government who is sent to spend a year in the sub-Arctic North. His mission is to find a way to get rid of the wolves that have supposedly been devastating the caribou herds, but he learns that men, rather than wolves, are the predators. Visually (and aurally, too), the film is magnificent. It needs a more stirring script and a central actor with more range (and some depth). But there's a lot of free-floating transcendence, and though it doesn't serve the prosaic story, it certainly holds you. Everything that Ballard (working with Hiro Narita as the cinematographer) shoots seems new, and it has a distinctive, shimmering purity.—P.K. (Walter Reade Theatre; Aug. 7-8.)

An Officer and a Gentleman (1982)—This formula romantic melodrama, which involves the regenerative moral powers of military discipline, seems to come out of a time warp, but the director, Taylor Hackford, does a smashing job of making the retrograde love story whiz by. He has a headlong style; he gives the picture so much propulsion that it gains a momentum of its own. It's crap, but crap on a motorcycle. Richard Gere is the tightly wound-up loner who is determined to become a flyer; the movie centers on his thirteen-week basic-training ordeal at the Naval Aviation Officer Candidate School in the Northwest, near Puget Sound. Gere has a striking moment when the character cracks, after the tough drill sergeant (Louis Gossett, Jr.) has caught him in some petty chiselling and has punished him. But after he has broken down—when you expect him to be emotionally transfigured—he's still Richard Gere, lost in his own placid beauty. As the mill-worker heroine, Debra Winger brings the film sultriness; you pull for this heroine because her tough-chick little-girl insolence plays off the avid look in her eyes that tells you she longs to make human contact. Winger convinces you that this girl really believes her life would be empty if she didn't share it with the hero. Gossett plays the sergeant bone hard; it's a beautifully hammy austere performance. There are also impressive characterizations by David Keith as the hero's friend and Robert Loggia as the hero's father, and there are entertaining flashes of Tony Plana as an officer candidate with a Mohawk haircut and Lisa Eilbacher as a woman candidate. They all work under a handicap: the script, by Douglas Day Stewart, is schematic in the manner of TV drama, circa 1955.—P.K. (Theatre 80 St. Marks; Aug. 4.)

Poetic Justice—Four young blacks, including Justice (Janet Jackson) and Lucky (Tupac Shakur), drive from Los Angeles to Oakland over the weekend. This being the movies, it turns out to be a journey of revelation—more for the characters, in this case, than for the audience. We sit and stare while they bicker and smooch. The movie was written and directed by John Singleton, and it marks a depressing departure from his first feature, "Boyz N the Hood," which buzzed with rage and frustration. After a punchy start, the new film takes people away from their troubles, but it's a vacation without fun; we watch Justice gazing out to sea, or intoning lines of what is supposed to be her own verse. The poetry, written by Maya Angelou, clumps along with a confessional earnestness that makes you clench your fists and try not to laugh. The only live wire is Lucky, with his deep wariness of life; he has a couple of sprightly scenes that prod the picture awake. Otherwise, however, "Poetic Justice" feels oddly conservative in the kinds of feelings it shares out among its characters (especially the women), and in the cute domestic destinies it imagines for them. Like Jackson herself (who never gets to sing), the whole enterprise is so poker-faced, and takes itself so seriously, that you're left wondering how Singleton could have shed so much creative energy between one film and the next.—A.L. (8/2/93) (19th Street East 6, Murray Hill Cinemas, Manhattan Twin, Orpheum VII, Waverly, 84th Street Sixplex, and National Twin.)

Rising Sun—Philip Kaufman's witty, luxuriantly sinister mystery thriller is set in contemporary Los Angeles: a sleek, corporate environment that isn't merely shady and deceitful, but fundamentally inauthentic, like virtual reality. The murder of a blond party girl in the boardroom of a powerful Japanese corporation exposes a dense network of connections—among business enterprises (Japanese and American), politicians, the police, and the press. The L.A.P.D. detectives investigating the case—Connor (Sean Connery), a Japan expert, and Smith (Wesley Snipes), his young partner—don't stand heroically apart from this alluring corporate culture; they're ambiguous heroes in a looking-glass world. Connery and Snipes are both wonderful here. Kaufman treats cop-movie narrative conventions and film-noir visual style with a kind of affectionate irony; the picture provides plenty of creepy atmosphere and violent action, and its pace is relentless, but the over-all mood is playful, almost giddy. This detective story is a thrilling and eerily suggestive tour of a territory whose boundaries are maddeningly elusive, murderously fluid.—T.R. (7/26/93) (Baronet, Coronet, Orpheum VII, Art Greenwich Twin, Chelsea Cinemas, Regency, and Criterion Center.)

Sleepless in Seattle—A romantic comedy, of sorts. The romance is airy and distant, because the lovers never meet until the final scene, and the comedy is kind of wistful, because it was directed by Nora Ephron. Tom Hanks plays Sam, left miserable by the death of his wife, with only his young son, Jonah (Ross Malinger), to console him. The consolation goes a bit far; Jonah rings up a radio talk show to say that his dad needs love. Many listeners melt with sympathy, none more so than Annie (Meg Ryan), in Baltimore, shortly to be married and none too happy about it. For the rest of the movie, fate—and Jonah—do their best to bring the couple together, despite the continent that divides them. Hanks and Ryan have quick wits, and funny faces to match—they should be striking sparks off each other, not mooching around thousands of miles apart and waiting for something to happen. Hanks has a few goofy outbursts, and there is lively backup from Rosie O'Donnell and Rob Reiner as helpful friends, but anyone expecting another "When Harry Met Sally . . ." will be disappointed. At least Harry *met* Sally.—A.L. (7/19/93) (Movieland 8th Street Triplex, 19th Street East 6, 34th Street Showplace, Beekman, Orpheum VII, 84th Street Sixplex, and Criterion Center.)

So I Married an Axe Murderer—This amateurish crazy comedy stars Mike Myers as a San Francisco coffeehouse poet in love with a female butcher (Nancy Travis) who may have killed three previous mates. Like Myers' panicky smirk of a lead performance, the film seesaws between lack of confidence and overconfidence: flat, dated repartee between Myers and Anthony LaPaglia (as a would-be Serpico) follows a comical trick shot tracing the genesis of a cappuccino. Either Robbie Fox's screenplay never had connective tissue, or the director, Thomas Schlamme, cut it up into a string of paper clowns. Several cameo performers—Phil Hartman, Charles Grodin, and the uncredited Alan Arkin—polish self-contained parts to perfection and show up the rest of the movie. Myers gets more laughs as the hero's boisterous Scotch dad than he does as a romantic comedian; the willfully weird cast includes Brenda Fricker and Amanda Plummer.—M.S. (Village Theatre VII, Murray Hill Cinemas, First & 62nd Cinemas, Orpheum VII, Chelsea Cinemas, and Columbus Circle.)

La Vie de Bohème—Directed by Aki Kaurismäki. In French. (Reviewed in this issue.) (Film Forum.)

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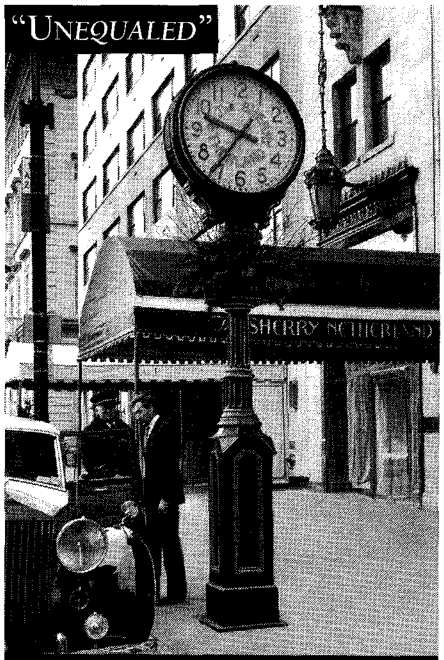

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THE NEW YORKER

THE TALK OF THE TOWN

JUSTICE AND PEACE

THE idea that there are lawyers who don't enjoy litigation may be difficult to grasp, but such lawyers exist, and a group of them met the other day in a shabby room on East Thirtieth Street. They were there for a conference of the International Alliance of Holistic Lawyers, an organization dedicated to purging the legal profession of conflict and stress. Its founder, Bill van Zyverden, had come down from Middlebury, Vermont, where he has his own legal practice, to preside over the meeting, and he asked those present to sit in a circle, to hold hands, and then, one by one, to describe their emotions. Complying with this request, Eric Offner, a trademark attorney in New Hyde Park who used to be a law professor at Hofstra, declared, "I feel connected to the universe."

The alliance claims two hundred and seventy-eight members in six countries, but only nineteen had shown up at the meeting. Mr. van Zyverden, a tall, skinny man with glasses and a toothy grin, told them how miserable he had been as a lawyer before he adopted the holistic approach. The adversarial nature of the work had often made him short of breath, he said. Later, in an interview, Mr. van Zyverden explained the principles of holistic law. "You look at the whole situation," he said. "You don't focus on a narrow view of any one particular event. When a client comes in and says 'Someone hit me,' instead of saying 'How are we going to get back at this person' you say 'Why did this happen in the first place? I need to find out why you were struck. Was it self-defense, or were you the aggressor? How long have you known the person? I need to know why you've chosen to hit back, and not to talk it out. We need to heal the person of his violent behavior, or else it's just going to happen again.' " Mr. van Zyverden said he always tried to bring about a peaceful resolution of any dispute. "A lot of lawyers will fight for their client without looking at the broader picture and seeing that maybe there's a way in which everyone can be happy."

Unfortunately, the conference itself was less than totally peaceful. Sitting on Mr. van Zyverden's right was a woman named Janet K Bloom, who described herself as "a certified imaging trainer." She wasn't a lawyer herself, but had been invited along to teach the lawyers about "eidetic imaging." As part of the lesson, Ms. Bloom asked Mr. van Zyverden to recall a troubling childhood experience (he told of a time his father wrongly accused him of stealing five dollars) and then asked the others to imagine themselves in the same situation—an exercise she called "empathy imaging." Ms. Bloom's demonstration lasted about two hours, and several of the lawyers plainly considered it a waste of their time. As anger and exasperation grew, two of them threatened to walk out, and even the lawyer who had earlier felt "connected to the universe" now pronounced himself "a little agitated."

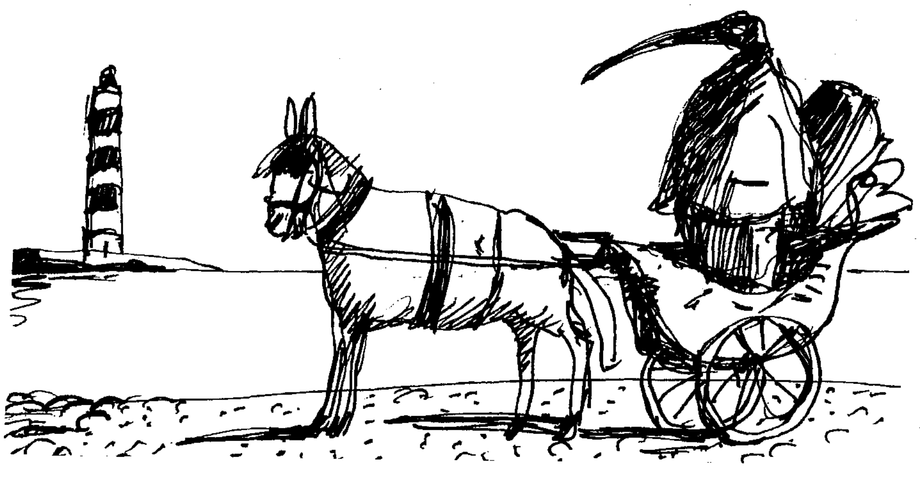
After a break for lunch, calm was restored, and Mr. van Zyverden said that, while he had been deeply hurt by the hostile reaction to the empathy session, he felt he had grown immensely as a result of it. The meeting ended peacefully, and Mr. van Zyverden made ready to return to Middlebury to continue his work at the Holistic Justice Center there, at which he is the only practicing lawyer. He said that he generally charges a hundred dollars an hour for consultations, and that there was no kind of case he wouldn't take on, or in which the holistic approach didn't work.

Did he ever turn away a client?

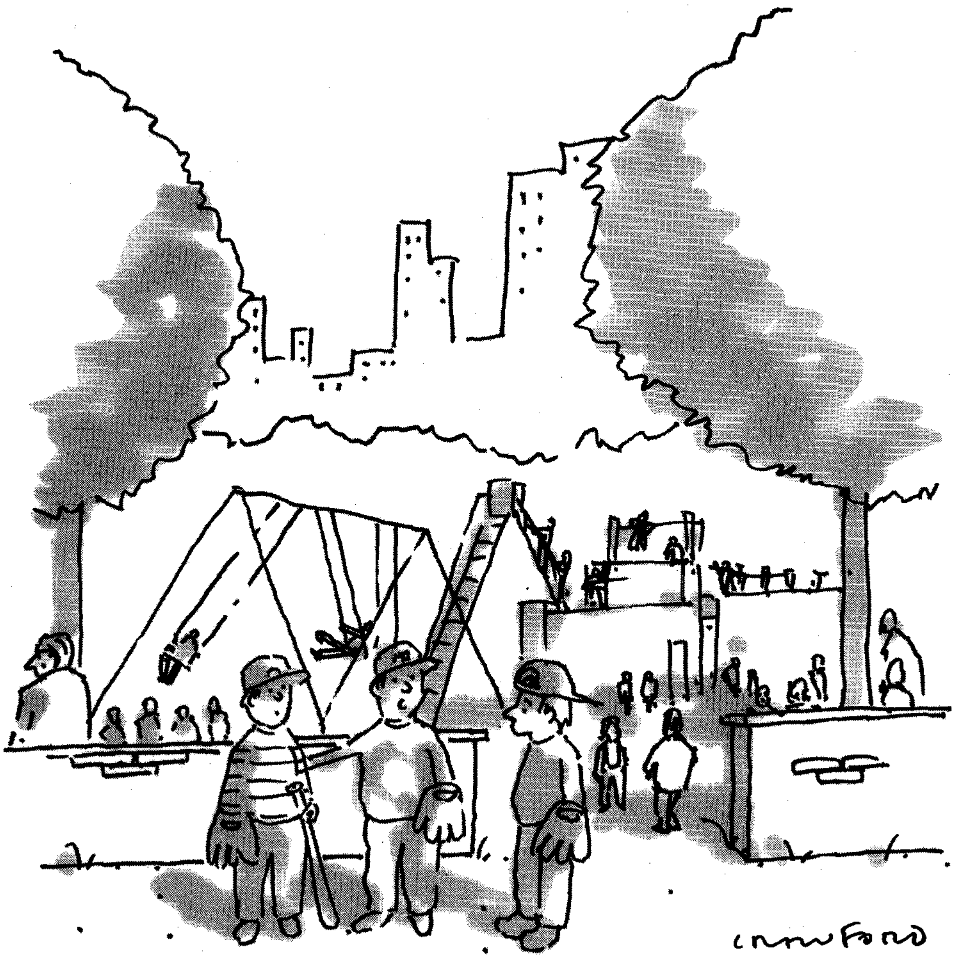
"If the client's motivation is for revenge, not for justice, then I tell him to go somewhere else," he said.

SPECIAL AGENT

THE great literary dealmaker of Washington, D.C., has an extensive collection of antique cufflinks,



DANIEL MAIA



"This is Donovan. He's pretty sure he's gay, too."

which he keeps locked up in a bank. Sometimes he buys elegant buttons and makes them into cufflinks. He collects pencils, too, and vintage pens. They're stacked in long, tidy piles on his desk. One that he showed off recently had a miniature plastic hot dog floating inside its transparent top. "It's not Oscar Mayer," Robert Barnett said. "I think it's Hormel." He orders his lawyerly shirts and shoes from London; his suspenders are navy blue. His triple-wheeled Rolodex is as big as a drum, and carries over six thousand names. He takes and returns eighty calls a day, minimum, and logs them all (incoming and outgoing), using his pencils and pens.

Bob Woodward, Sam Donaldson, Ben Bradlee, Art Buchwald, Dan Quayle, Marilyn Quayle, James Baker, Robert Bork, Kitty Dukakis, George Will, David Stockman: these have been clients of Robert Barnett's. And now President Clinton's mother, Virginia Kelley, has been added to Mr. Barnett's list. He has arranged for Simon & Schuster to publish her life story, which she is writing with a journalist from Arkansas, James Morgan. "It will be about being a single mother," Mr. Barnett explained. "It will be about her battle with breast cancer, her difficult relationship with her second husband, her love of horse racing, her affection for Elvis Presley."

A partner in the firm of Williams & Connolly, Mr. Barnett charges by the hour (four hundred dollars). He negotiates contracts for his clients with publishers and television companies the way any agent would, but, unlike a normal agent, he does not take a percentage of the profits, so his fees are lower by far than the market standard. "Well-known journalists don't need someone taking their cash all the time" is how Mr. Barnett puts it. His clients are all grateful for that. "He's a very big man, in my view," Sam Donaldson says.

Mr. Barnett says he got started in the book business during the 1984 election. A partisan Democrat, he played the part of then Vice-President George Bush in the mock Presidential debates. He met Geraldine Ferraro that way, and she later retained him as her lawyer, in which capacity he helped to peddle her memoirs. Mr. Barnett's next literary client was Ronald Reagan's budget director, David Stockman, whose memoirs cost Harper & Row over two million dollars. Mr. Barnett's business has been bipartisan ever since. He played Bush again during the Dukakis campaign and also during the Clinton campaign, then straightaway began negotiating memoir deals for James Baker and Dan Quayle. In February, James Carville and Mary Matalin announced that they would write about their campaign adventures in a book to be published jointly by Random House and Simon & Schuster. Mr. Barnett orchestrated that unprecedented deal, too. Only about a third of his practice is taken up with media work, and a number of his clients are in the automotive business; he thinks the mixture is a healthy one.

Growing up, Mr. Barnett admired Adlai Stevenson and Jerry Orbach, the television actor and Broadway star, who is from his home town—Waukegan, Illinois. People who have seen his George Bush performance say it's remarkable. "He talked like Bush," James Carville says. "He had some of the cadences. He would do some of the kind of goofy stuff Bush would do." When Mr. Bush signed on for his own book project early last month (he's writing about foreign policy with Brent Scowcroft), Mr. Barnett wasn't involved. The Bush family lawyer negotiated the contract with Knopf, but, Mr. Barnett says, he and the Bushes have always been on friendly terms.

JOCKEY CLUB

THE hip-hop nation was in the house and was chilling patiently, even though the New Music Seminar's D.J. Battle for World Supremacy was very late in starting. The delay probably had something to do with the slow rate of ingress at the door of the Sheraton New York's Imperial Ballroom, where extremely large young men in black T-shirts were checking the credentials of arriving audience members and frisking them for weapons. Fear was not palpable: the attitude of security men and crowd alike was more genial, stylized belligerence than genuine menace.

The Imperial Ballroom was packed, and a standing-room-only crowd of music-industry entrepreneurs and aspirants lined the back and sides of the auditorium. The profusion of sartorial hip-hop styles was well represented by athletic shoes (Adidas, Champion, Nike, Reebok, Puma), headgear (kerchiefs and baseball caps worn backward, sidewise, and regulation), and T-shirts with slogans ("Legalize It," "Wrekshop," "Bungee Frogs," "Kill 'em All," "Triggers Got No Heart," "Recycling the Unsalvageable," "I'm Living Fat").

The D.J. Battle finally got under way when the creator and promoter of the event, D.J. Clark Kent (of Supermen Productions), appeared onstage and took the microphone. After some preliminary comments ("Will you turn that spotlight shit off?"), he went over the ground rules of the contest. He was flanked by two tables, each with two large Technics SL/1210MK2 turntables, where the hip-hop d.j.s were going to spin their disks. Behind him, seated at a dais draped with red cloth, were the five judges, all of them d.j.s themselves, and all of them glowering under the bills of their baseball caps as they slumped low in their chairs. A sixty-second countdown clock stood in front of the dais; sixteen d.j. finalists faced a four-round elimination.

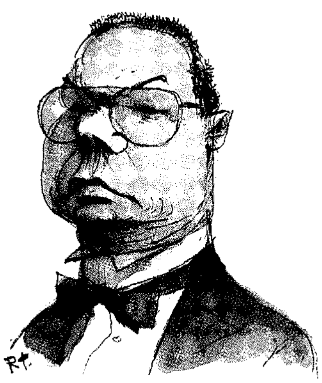
"As you know," D.J. Kent told the crowd, "d.j.s don't get no kind of recognition." Rap artists, he explained, were stars, while the brilliant d.j.s who sampled and mixed the beats and the music that accompanied the rappers were the anonymous rhythm sections of the hip-hop sound. In a world gone digital, they were arcane masters of the lost art of analogue record-spinning, scratching, and disk-juggling. "Hey, yo, this is a message to the contestants," he concluded. "The first two rounds, you only get to spin once, so y'all got to flip your best shit." Then he turned the mike over to Kid Capri and Red Alert, two New York radio d.j.s.

The first round began with D.J. Supreme, from Washington, going head-to-head against JMD, of the Bronx.

RICHARD THOMPSON

YOU SAY TOMATO

THERE are at least two ways of pronouncing the name Powell. You can rhyme it with "bowel" or you can rhyme it with "bowl." In this country, "bowel" is generally preferred. In Britain, there is an unfathomable snobbish prejudice in favor of "bowl." The Saturday before last, in Washington, the British Ambassador, Sir Robin Renwick, gave a black-tie dinner dance in honor of two couples named Powell—General and Mrs. Colin Powell, and Sir Charles and Lady Powell. General Powell, who is, of course, the chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, is in the "bowel" camp. Sir Charles, who was for many years the chief foreign- and defense-policy adviser to Margaret Thatcher and, after her, to John Major, is of the "bowl" persuasion. Sir Charles has already retired from the public service, and the General is to do so shortly. The dinner was given, in part, to say goodbye to him.



It being the proper role of a diplomat to stress points of contact rather than divergence, the Ambassador, in a speech of welcome, referred facetiously to the Knight and the General as "cousins" but managed to fudge the pronunciation question. He said that the dinner was a party "for all the Powells" (choosing, in deference to the American guest of honor, the "bowel" version of the name), and thereafter referred to both Powells by only their first names. However, General Powell, in his reply, raised a question about the Ambassador's pronunciation of his first name, Colin, saying he was amused by the Englishness of it. Sir Robin (as in the red-breasted bird) had pronounced Colin in what appeared to me to be the correct manner—not like "pollen," which is how an Englishman would normally pronounce it, but like that part of the large intestine which President Reagan once had operated on, this being how the General likes it said. But clearly he can't have got it completely right. Sir Charles, prudently, didn't make a speech at all.

There were about a hundred and fifty people at the dinner, and they included senior figures from the Administration (such as Defense Secretary Les Aspin, who was greeted by General Powell with a cheerful salute), Congress, and the diplomatic corps. But there was one noteworthy absentee. This was Sir Charles's younger brother Jonathan Powell, a first secretary at the British Embassy, who happened to be out of town. Had he been there, he would have added to the confusion, because he, for reasons unknown, has deserted his brother's camp for the General's, and rhymes his name with "bowel."

One of the topics discussed at dinner was the news that President Clinton is planning to nominate as America's next Ambassador to Britain the man who preceded General Powell as chairman of the Joint Chiefs, Admiral William J. Crowe, Jr. Admiral Crowe would surely make a fine Ambassador, so let us hope that his confirmation will not be jeopardized by the fact that he insists on rhyming his name not with "crow," as the British would certainly expect, but with "cow." After the tables were cleared, the dancing began. Among the couples to take the floor were Brent Scowcroft, President Bush's national-security adviser, and Maureen Dowd, of the Washington bureau of the *Times*. Their vowels (or "voe-els") do not match any better than those of the Powells (or "Poe-ells"), but they danced as one.

—ALEXANDER CHANCELLOR

Supreme's minute in the spotlight was a nimble ballet of record-switching, tone-arm cuing, and fingertip manipulation of his twelve-inch singles. His efforts produced an artful cacophony of scratches, squeaks, heavy-metal guitar chords, booming bass beats, and crashing percussion. He was rewarded with a big round of applause. His opponent was not so fortunate. JMD, a young man with a shaved head, sunglasses, and a Phillies Blunt cigar in his teeth, played a more restrained set that was loudly booed. Supreme won.

The first-round winners included Tone B Nimble (from Illinois), Mr. Sinister (Queens), 8-Ball (San Francisco), Yoshi (Japan), and Rectangle (San Diego). The audience was enthusiastic and intent but highly discriminating. A d.j. whose set seemed spectacular to the uninitiated would receive polite applause, but other d.j.s were able to tap a mysterious current of excitement in the crowd, and hundreds of baseball caps would begin nodding to the beat, uplifted arms would begin waving, and hundreds of people would leap to their feet and cheer wildly.

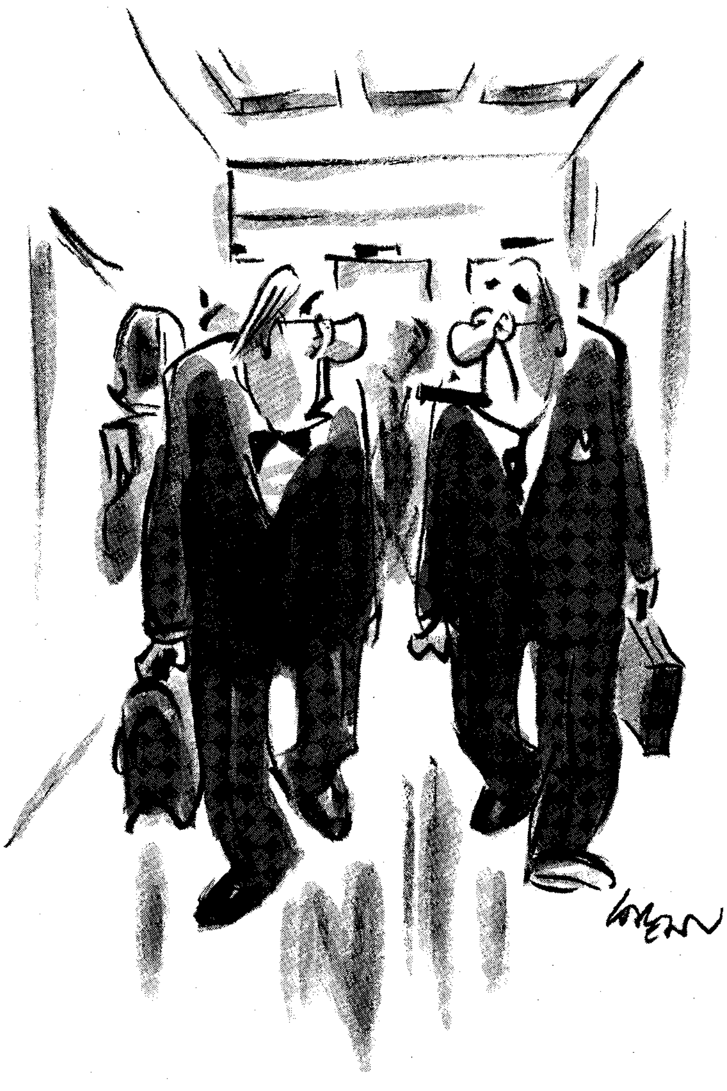
The high point of the semifinal round was 8-Ball's battle with Rectangle. 8-Ball, a slight twenty-one-year-old Filipino-American who wore a black Kangol hat, amazed the audience with a set that ended with a repeating sound-splice dissing of his opponent: "Rectangle . . . fucked it up. . . . Rectangle . . . fucked it up." Kid Capri was incredulous. "How did he do that shit?" he asked. "He went out and recorded a record?"

8-Ball, whose real name is Cesar Aldea, Jr., and who learned to mix records when he was eight years old, faced Mr. Sinister in the final round. The judges and the audience were clearly in love with 8-Ball. He won the championship jacket and gold ring with another remarkable performance—one that featured his ability to play melodies ("Yankee Doodle," "Frère Jacques") by manipulating the speed of a hearing-test recording of a single long tone. 8-Ball posed for a group photograph with the other contestants, all of whom adopted prizefighter glares for the camera. When the photographer finished, 8-Ball's expression reverted to the dazzled smile of joy and disbelief of a beauty-pageant winner. He was mobbed by admirers and record-company scouts as a security man with a bullhorn ordered the crowd to clear the room.

FERRETS' RIGHTS

FERRETS are generally considered mean and bloodthirsty little animals, so it is surprising to learn that they are the third most popular pet in the United States and that there may be at least ten thousand of them in New York City. The first of these estimates comes from the American Ferret Association, which has its headquarters in Frederick, Maryland, and the second from Gary Kaskel, one of the founders of the New York City Friends of Ferrets, which recently put on the First Annual NYC Ferret Fest, in Central Park. The fest was an informal event designed to bring ferret owners and their pets together for "fun," "games," and "ferret info," but there was more to it than that. Mr. Kaskel was also collecting money for a legal-defense fund to protect the rights of ferrets against the city Health Department, which he claimed had engaged in unconstitutional acts of persecution against them. He cited a case in which he said that the city had seized and destroyed one woman's ferret, suspecting it of rabies, whereas subsequent tests showed that it had been rabies-free.

The American domestic ferret belongs to the *Mustelidae*, or weasel family, and is a descendant of the European polecat. According to Mr. Kaskel, the American ferret is not the wild animal of the popular imagination but has been domesticated since about 3000 B.C. The people at the fest—about a hundred showed up at different times—spent three hours playing with their ferrets and extolling them to each other as model, undemanding pets. Some also entered their ferrets in competitions. A ferret named Mauser won the prize for "the ferret with the longest tail"; one named Stinky was proclaimed "the ferret with the darkest nose"; Einstein, twenty-three inches long, got the "longest ferret" award; and Fuzzy carried off the prize for "the most talented ferret," a distinction it achieved by kissing its owner on command. ♦



"Watch yourself, Bannister! I'm like Clinton—faster than I look."

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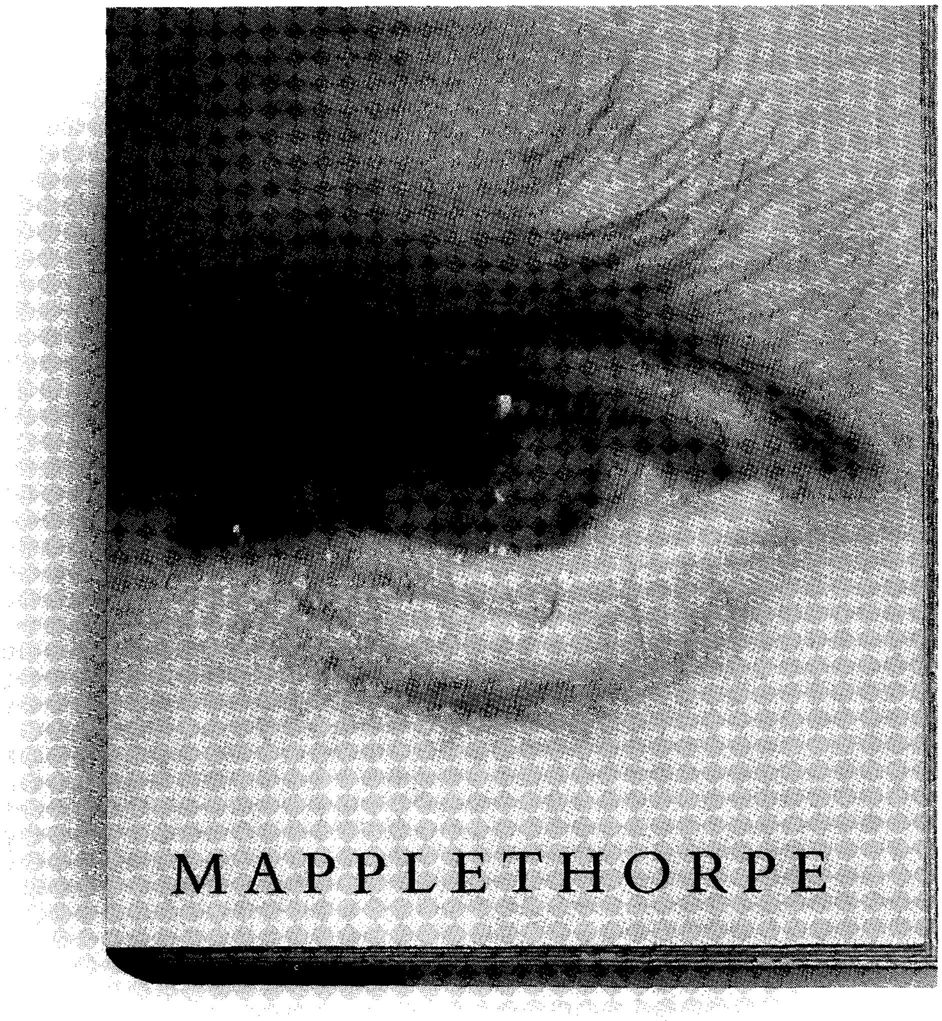

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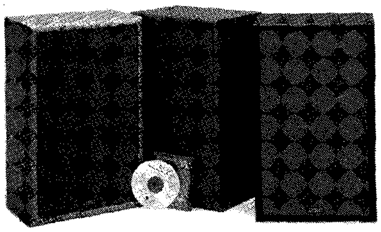

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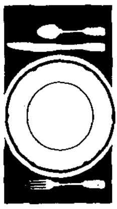

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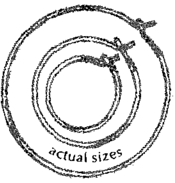

ANNALS OF DISASTER

BATTLE ON THE SNY

Coached by a farmer known as Peanuts, the people came out to fight the Mississippi as it threatened to breach a levee that had stood firm for more than a century.

BY JAMES B. STEWART

Kenneth Crim, John (Peanuts) Guenseth, and Alexander House. Guenseth knew the river better than just about anybody.

ALICIA CZECHOWSKI

On Wednesday, June 30th, at about 10 P.M., as Alexander J. House turned in early for the night, he heard the first drops of rain on the metal roof of his house, in Payson, Illinois—a farmhouse that was built by his great-grandfather in the nineteenth century. Just before going to bed, House had gazed out over his pond and the rolling fields to the west, where the land descends toward the Mississippi. There, in a basin formed by the old Sny Channel, which runs parallel to the east bank of the Mississippi, lies some of the richest farmland in the world, fourteen hundred acres of which belong to House and his family. Over the fields that night he'd seen an ominous bank of black clouds, confirming local forecasts of potentially heavy rains and thunderstorms.

House was hoping to fall asleep quickly, since in only a few hours he had to be up to help load trucks with calcium carbonate, a white mineral that his company extracts from the high bluffs defining the floodplain of the Mississippi. Like many farmers in the area, House is also a businessman: he helped found and co-owns Quincy Carbonates. After graduating from Kenyon College and the Loyola University business school, he could have moved to Chicago, St. Louis, or some other big city. (At thirty-five, he is t[illegible] and handsome, with dark-blond hair. The *Times Magazine* once ran a full-page photograph of him in an article on bachelors. He has since married.) But, he says, "I grew up in Payson and always knew I'd come back." Though he does a fair amount of farming himself, he rents out his Sny acreage to Kenneth Crim, a powerfully built forty-six-year-old, who farms not only House's land but also nearby land belonging to his own mother-in-law.

That night, as the thunder crashed and the rain beat more heavily on the roof, House couldn't sleep. Finally, around midnight, he got up to look outside. Worried about getting the trucks in for loading, he dressed, jumped into his own truck, a Dodge Ram four-wheel-drive pickup, and headed west toward his plant. Along the way, he noticed that power failures had plunged the area into darkness. By eerie, sudden flashes of lightning, he could see that ditches and creeks were overflowing. When he got to Illinois Route 57, which runs from Quincy—the commercial hub of the area, fifteen miles to the north—along the old Sny Basin, it had turned into a rushing waterway. At 1 A.M., House got into a front-end loader and started digging a drainage ditch to protect his plant. "Basically, there was a wall of water coming at us," he says. Farther south, on House's farmland, Ken Crim got up to watch the deluge, and thought, Holy shit.

About eleven o'clock, in Quincy, Robert Nall, the sheriff of Adams County, seeing the torrential rains, got into his unmarked squad car and drove out along some of the country roads north of town. Gazing upward periodically through the windshield, the sheriff, who is fifty-one, saw what he describes as the "most spectacular show of lightning I've ever seen." It lasted not the usual minutes but hour after hour. As the severity of the storm became obvious, he headed down to his office, on the first floor of the Adams County Courthouse, and began calling his deputies, sending them out on the roads to look for dangerous conditions and for any cars that might have been swept off in the deluge. From around the county came reports that creeks had burst their banks, flooding roads to the point where the roads had all but formed small rivers themselves. When Nall went home, at about 2 A.M., rain was still falling, and he had the ominous feeling that worse news was to come.

Around seven the next morning, Leo Henning, the operations manager for Quincy's WGEM TV and Radio, got up and checked for damage in his basement. He found that several inches of water had collected overnight. Henning, a native of Chicago, may have been one of the few people in Quincy who slept through the storm. Like many people there, he didn't ordinarily give much thought to heavy rains. Quincy's founders, back in 1822, had the foresight to establish their river port on some of the highest bluffs on the east bank of the Mississippi. From the old dock areas along the riverfront, where stern-wheelers once called regularly, the streets rise steeply to the east. From the buildings surrounding the old town square, high above the river, and from WGEM's offices, in the Hotel Quincy, which is just around the corner, one has sweeping views across the river of miles of the fertile lowlands of Missouri. Those lands, and also vast tracts both north and south of Quincy, with their farms and with the towns and hamlets that dot the landscape, are protected by an elaborate system of levees and drainage districts. Seeing the water in his basement, Henning recognized a story. Two years ago, WGEM Radio had shifted to a twenty-four-hour news-and-talk format, and this was more than a routine weather bulletin.

Overnight, Quincy had received a record six inches of rain. Some areas to the north had been drenched even more heavily. The Mississippi, which typically rises or falls an inch or so in a twenty-four-hour period, had risen two feet. The downpour, coming after what had been an unusually wet spring, left Henning, Nall, Crim, House, and just about everybody else in and around Quincy wondering the same thing: Would the levees hold?

FROM my apartment, on the Upper West Side of New York, I was wondering that, too. Quincy is my home town. I was born there, in Blessing Hospital, in 1951, and spent nearly all my life there until I graduated from Quincy High School and went on to college. My father is the national sales manager of WGEM, where he has worked for most of his life, and he and my mother still live in a comfortable subdivision on the south edge of town, which looks out over a white farmhouse and a red barn across the street. That's about as close to a farm as I came, growing up in Quincy. At Quincy High, the largest club in school was the Future Farmers of America, whose members headed home right after the last bell to help with chores, leaving sports and other extracurricular activities to the city kids. My first job was as a reporter at the Quincy *Herald-Whig*, where I worked during summers. One of my first assignments was covering the Adams County Fair, and I can still discuss the fine points of Duroc and Poland China hogs. I also learned something about floods: I especially remember one in the late sixties, when my high-school friends and I helped throw sandbags. I returned to Quincy to see the flood of 1973, which damaged large areas of Missouri across from the city. Now, twenty years later, I knew my immediate family in Quincy would be safe, since they were on high ground. But in May I'd seen the high river level lapping over a just completed riverside park in Quincy, and I'd heard from my parents about all the rain since. I knew they were worried, and I decided to go out there. As I flew up the Mississippi in a commuter plane from St. Louis, I saw that the familiar landscape had been transformed. Small streams were swollen to the usual size of the Mississippi, and in places the Mississippi itself sprawled all the way to the horizon, its old channel barely discernible from the pattern of trees and, beyond those, half-submerged roofs of barns, houses,

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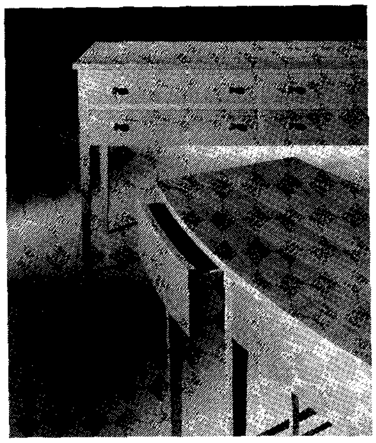

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towns. Already, it was obvious that this was a flood like none I had ever experienced.

EVEN before Sheriff Nall left home on Thursday morning after the downpour, his phone was ringing with calls from people living in the low-lying farmlands around Quincy. They had little doubt about what the night's deluge meant. They'd been keeping an uneasy eye on the river since April, when the Mississippi first rose above the technical flood level at Quincy's lock and dam. That in itself wasn't unusual or worrisome; the river frequently rises above flood level following the spring melting, and the extensive system of locks and dams and flood-control levees established during the past century to contain the unruly river had led to a certain complacency. But this year, as the planting season came to an end and spring turned to summer, the river barely budged, and then, slowly but ominously, it began to rise. On June 25th, it had to be closed to barge traffic, and at the same time many of the locks and dams of the upper Mississippi, no longer able to contain the flow, were simply thrown open. Memorial Bridge, the older of Quincy's two bridges, was closed, its Missouri terminus, in an area unprotected by levees, having been submerged. No one in the area could remember when the spring floods had persisted into what is usually the dry season—a time when farmers customarily pray for rain to hasten the tasselling of the corn crop. This year, though, an unusually cool air mass had settled around a low-pressure system in the Pacific Northwest, drawing more cool air into the upper Midwest from Canada. At the same time, a high-pressure system over the Southeast had sucked hot, moist air from the Gulf of Mexico northward over the plains. Persistent storms had broken out where the two air masses met, along a broad band stretching northeastward from Kansas into Missouri, Iowa, and western Illinois. Because the jet stream remained further south than usual, these pressure systems, instead of breaking up and moving on to the east, had stayed put.

The most important of the calls to Sheriff Nall that Thursday morning came from some of the area's most influential citizens—the local levee commissioners, who preside over the drainage districts that line the Mississippi. Quincy sits at the center of a string of districts running from north to south along the east bank of the river: Hunt, Lima Lake, Indian Grave, South Quincy, and Sny Island. Just across the river from Quincy, in West Quincy, Missouri, is the Fabius River drainage district: it surrounds the western ends of the Quincy bridges. Of these six districts, the Sny Island, with a fifty-four-mile-long earth-and-sand levee, is by far the largest, covering about a hundred and ten thousand acres; in fact, its levee is the largest in Illinois, and one of the oldest in the country. Construction began, using mules and horses, shovels and manual labor, in 1872, and was completed three years later.

The area protected by the Sny Island levee includes some of the most fertile acreage on earth. The entire district lies in the floodplain of the Mississippi, and before the levee was constructed it was flooded routinely, collecting a fresh layer of silt each time. The rich, black, moist soil typically produces yields that are from twenty to forty per cent greater than the fertile upland soil of central Illinois, and those high yields are reflected in the prices Sny Basin acreage commands today—about twenty-five hundred dollars an acre.

When the levee was completed, the enhanced value of the newly protected farmland wasn't lost on neighboring landowners, some of whose farms were being flooded with the waters diverted by the Sny levee-and-drainage system, and litigation broke out almost immediately. No less a personage than former President Benjamin Harrison represented the Sny landowners, who ultimately prevailed before the United States Supreme Court. To administer the vast project, local farmers got a court order approving the creation of the state's first drainage-district-and-levee commission, which financed the project by issuing bonds. To retire the bonds, local farmers and landowners paid an assessment, spawning a system that has been copied throughout the region, and that led to the formation of numerous levee commissions, with commissioners elected by the local landowners. Alex House's grandfather Lowell House served as a Sny commissioner for many years. The Sny proved a model in other ways, too. Not since 1888 had the levee been seriously breached—a source of enormous local pride but also, perhaps, of some hubris. In recent times, most farmers in the area have carried hail insurance, but virtually no one farming in the Sny district carries flood insurance.

WHEN Nall talked to the commissioners Thursday morning, they were getting worried but weren't panicking. They were beginning to organize preservation efforts in their districts, and already they could see that they would need more manpower. Sheriff Nall was someone they called not just to keep him posted about road conditions and the need for sheriffs' patrols but as a source of manpower, for Nall was their link to a relatively recent program in Illinois that provides prison inmates for local labor. The problem was that everybody, not just in the Adams County levee districts but all the way upstream, was clamoring for help. Nall said he'd see what he could do. If anyone could deliver, the commissioners thought, it was Nall, for he has been something of a legend in the area ever since he was first elected sheriff, in 1974. Nall had been a farmer himself, and one day, returning from the fields, he discovered that his house had been burglarized—practically everything was gone. As he tells the story, he called the man who was the sheriff at the time, and was told that everybody on the force was too busy to come out just then. A furious Nall grabbed his gun and, after some intrepid detective work, managed to round up a four-man burglary ring within a week and deliver them to the sheriff. "We could use somebody like you around here," the sheriff acknowledged, and Nall's career in law enforcement was launched.

Just after lunch on Thursday, Alex House, having managed to get his trucks loaded with calcium carbonate, got a call from Rebecca Jean Cox, at the Sny, as the Sny levee commission is generally referred to. House keeps a large bulldozer at his limestone quarry, and is on a list that the Sny keeps of people who are willing to volunteer their equipment in case of emergency. Could he get his bulldozer and bring it down to the levee to help reinforce it? House said he'd be right down, but when he reached Marblehead, a hamlet just north of the levee, a stream had overflowed its banks, flooding the bridge east of town leading to the quarry. The bulldozer was stuck.

When House arrived at the levee,

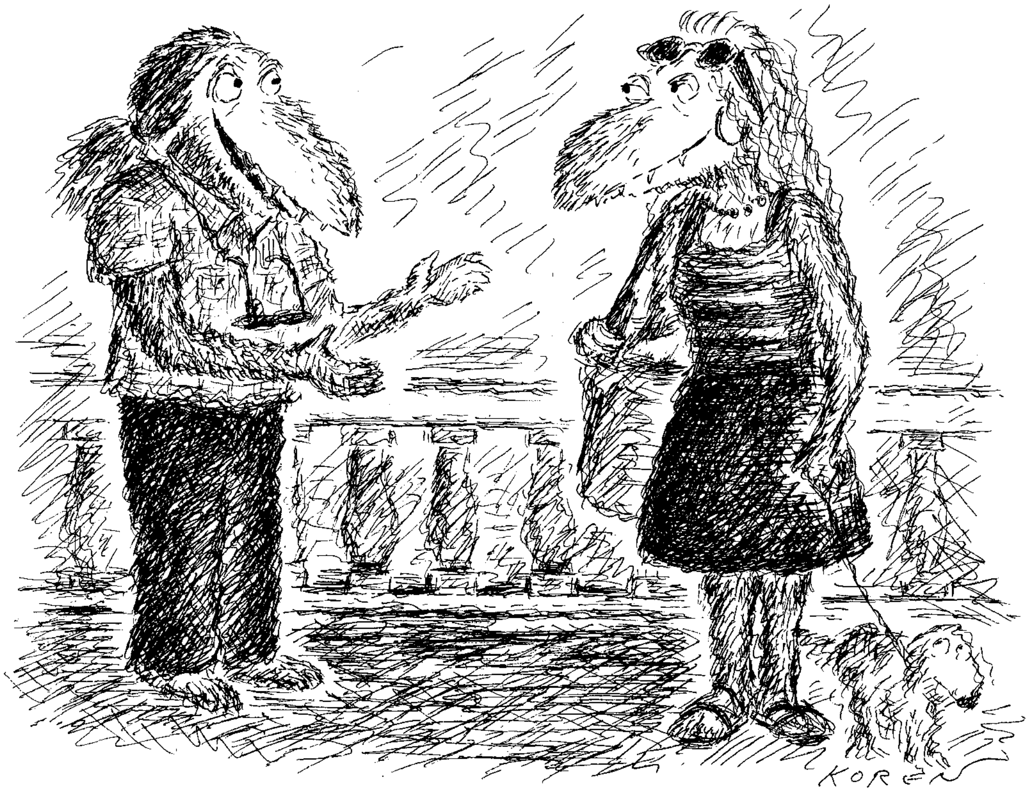
without his bulldozer, about twenty farmers and their relatives had gathered at Norman Brockmeyer's farm there, including Ken Crim; his aunt, Betty; his son, Eric; and his uncle, Harold Robbins. For House, looking out from the simple two-story white farmhouse that was being transformed into the levee headquarters, it was hard to believe that danger lurked just to the west. The season's heavy rains had left the vast fields of corn and soybeans luxuriant and vividly green, and a field of sunflowers blazed yellow in the distance. But the farmers' faces betrayed their anxiety. Ordinarily, the depth of the river at the Sny is about eleven feet; seventeen feet is considered the technical flood level. The Sny levee rises twenty-eight feet above the channel. Nobody knew the precise level of the river at that moment, but it looked to be about a foot below the top of the levee, or about twenty-seven feet. And it was rising at an alarming rate—about an inch an hour. Water was already seeping through the base of the levee into the fields, and the dirt road leading from the farmhouse to the levee had already turned into a quagmire. Worse, the National Weather Service had just issued a revised forecast, predicting a thirty-foot crest—a record—on Saturday, which was only forty-eight hours away. The evacuation of the entire Sny district had begun that morning, and was proceeding with amazing speed. People packed up their belongings for the trip to friends' or relatives' houses on higher ground. Animals, including those on some major hog farms in the immediate vicinity, were herded into trucks and driven to other farms for boarding. Some farmers, like Crim and House, simply took their livestock to market prematurely. In the background was the constant roar of trucks, laden with livestock, rumbling over gravel access roads.

In their years of farming, the group at the Brockmeyer farm had assembled an astonishing array of skills, from carpentry and veterinary medicine to the running and the repairing of heavy machinery. But most of them had never lived through a serious flood threat. They didn't really know much about levees. Because House had still been in high school during the last big flood, in 1973, he had to admit that he knew next to nothing. Crim had been a senior in high school back in the flood of 1965, and had done some sandbagging on this same stretch of levee, but then he'd gone on to Western Illinois University and subsequently farmed farther upstate, returning to the Sny area only in 1976, so he, too, missed the flood of 1973.

Fortunately, one of the early volunteers, whose farmhouse lay just beyond a row of trees, even closer to the river, was a man who had lived through every flood since 1947. His name is John Guenseth, but he's known to everyone in the area by his nickname, Peanuts, and some of his close friends have abbreviated that to Nuts. Peanuts is ordinarily a man of few words. He's thin, his angular face tanned and lined from decades of farming the Sny Basin. When he is asked a question, he tends to pause interminably, then answer in a deep, barely audible voice. Peanuts knew the river better than just about anybody. This was the first time he'd evacuated his family and animals. He himself stayed on in the farmhouse, but he recognized that it was perhaps just as well that his neighbors and fellow-volunteers didn't know much about what it takes to raise a levee. If they did, they'd be staggered by the magnitude of the task.

Farmers like Peanuts and Crim stood to lose not just their entire investment in this year's crop but perhaps their future livelihood as well. One of the reasons they didn't have flood insurance was that it would have added to their costs, and their profit margins were already razor thin. House had the resources to come back if the land flooded, but the others doubted whether they could. In any event, their farms and all the work they'd poured into them were here, and the river was here, too, threatening them.

Peanuts knew that a one-mile stretch of the levee lying just to the west of the Brockmeyer farm was a particularly weak link in the fifty-four miles of the Sny. Most of the Sny had been rebuilt in the late sixties to incorporate more sand into the levee, sand now being the preferred material for levee construction. Sand allows a certain amount of controlled seepage, and it is easily bulldozed from the base of the levee, even when wet, to increase the levee's height; indeed, by Friday morning about twenty-five bulldozers would be at work pushing sand from the bottom of the levee to the top along the length of the Sny. But, for some reason—none of the Sny's farmers seemed



"I hope you won't be offended if I tell you that you have the classic American face."

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WHAT AM I—CHOPPED LIVER?
BEK

to know why—sand had never been added to this particular stretch. It remained an old-fashioned earthen levee, and Thursday morning's bulldozing had already proved futile there. The waterlogged muck just slid back to the base of the levee. The one-mile stretch also inclined toward the river in a long convex curve, which is particularly vulnerable to the forces of a current. Peanuts explained that to raise this stretch of levee would require a wall made of wooden boards, two boards high (that is, two and a half feet), supported by wooden reinforcing beams and backed by sandbags, with the entire structure draped in plastic.

"What if it doesn't hold?" House asked.

No one answered, since the answer seemed self-evident. Finally, Harold Robbins, who is about five feet ten and weighs about two hundred and ninety pounds, said, "You're gonna see a blue flame this long"—he held his hands about four feet apart—"shoot out of this fat man's ass." That brought roars of laughter, which broke the tension. Robbins added, "You know, people think fat people can't run, but that's not true. They can run damn fast. They just can't run very far."

There wasn't any formal hierarchy to the levee-reinforcement operation; on the contrary, the volunteers got sensitive at any reference to anyone's being "in charge." But Crim seemed to possess a natural authority: he became the de-facto commander of this battle. On technical questions, everybody deferred to Peanuts. And House, mostly because he owned a cellular telephone, became the communications center, often working from the roof of his pickup. He got on the phone to various construction companies in the area, and soon trucks of lumber and gravel were arriving at the farm. Just restoring the road to the levee, so that the trucks could get to where they were needed, was a major engineering feat; tons of gravel had to be laid over the mud. Much of it sank and was soon covered with water, but in time a route was stabilized that could be traversed by four-wheel-drive vehicles.

As morning chores were finished and word spread through the area that help was needed, more and more farmers showed up, some from high ground many miles away. By evening, sections of boards were rising along the top of the levee as some seventy volunteers hauled the wood and sawed and hammered it. Somebody began calling this part of the Sny "the board levee," and the name stuck. Work continued through the night, though many of the original volunteers, who had been up since the storm broke the night before, were nearly dropping from fatigue. House finally quit at about ten to get some sleep and returned near dawn. Crim stayed the night. By 3 A.M., the first stretch of boards was in place. Still, as everybody knew, the boards were the easy part. The entire section now had to be buttressed with thousands of sandbags, each one of which had to be filled, moved along the levee, and put in place by hand. With the river now lapping just inches below the base of the boards, there was no way that even seventy farmers could outpace the river.

Early Saturday morning, Dean Paben, the levee superintendent, again got on the phone to Sheriff Nall, and this time told him that the situation was getting desperate—the Sny needed bodies, as fast as possible. Nall hadn't had much luck rounding up inmates. A new experimental program had gone into effect up in Greene County, in which first offenders facing up to five-year sentences got drastic reductions in return for entering a highly disciplined, boot-camp-like program. The program had been overwhelmed with applicants from Illinois's prison population, and had become quite selective: inmates chosen had to be no more than twenty-nine years old, physically fit, and highly motivated. Reflecting the demographics of the state's inmate population, most of them were from inner-city Chicago, were black, and knew nothing about farming or the river. Still, Nall thought they'd make ideal levee workers. But when he reached the warden he learned that the prisoners available were already in Niota, Illinois, a small town to the north. Nall's nearly twenty-year tenure as Adams County sheriff gives him a certain clout, which other sheriffs can't match. Nall won't say exactly what happened but just says he "called in his chips." By midmorning, thirty of the boot-camp inmates, along with fifteen prisoners from the county jail, were en route to the Sny. Nall called on the Quincy Salvation Army and the Red Cross to supply them with food and water, and both groups swung into action.

With the inmates on their way, Nall jumped into his car and headed for the levee. When he arrived, at about 8:30 A.M., sandbags were being filled and distributed, both by boat, along the outer edge of the levee, and by a human chain, inside it. "It looked like something out of 'Bridge on the River Kwai,' " the sheriff recalls. "The fear was there, all over their faces. I know most of these people. They had a look of tragedy." Nall himself grew up in Camp Point, a small farming community northwest of Quincy, but he didn't know much about the river—"I'm an upland guy," he explains—and to his eyes the situation already looked pretty bad. "There was heavy seepage all along the bend—I thought it was done, busted," he says. But then Peanuts came by. "He said it looked great," Nall recalls. "I didn't understand that."

Crim approached him, and asked, "Was you able to do anything for us?"

"I pulled strings," Nall said. "They're on their way."

Meanwhile, caught up in the spirit of emergency, Nall himself began hurling sandbags.

Crim, House, and the others on the levee heard the new arrivals before they saw them. As the prison van pulled up, the inmates jumped out, chanting and singing a rhythmic military cadence, and marched toward the levee. To the tired workers, the drug dealers and thieves were a welcome sight. They were smartly attired in white T-shirts and dark-blue trousers with orange stripes. More to the point, their biceps and chest muscles bulged. They formed a human chain and began heaving sandbags at twice the volunteers' rate, all the while continuing their singing and chanting. Their work was closely monitored by black-uniformed guards wearing dark glasses. All the other watchers were simply awed by the new workers, who showed no signs of tiring in ninety-five-degree heat. House was so impressed by them that late in the day he asked their supervisor if he might thank them on behalf of the other workers. As House recalls it, the supervisor snapped, "You certainly may not. I'm not satisfied with them. They were slacking. They ate like pigs—they didn't wait for everyone to be served." Indeed, he singled out one of the inmates and marched him down from the levee. "Drop," he commanded. The inmate fell into a half-raised pushup position over what House says was poison ivy. "Now freeze." The supervisor turned away and resumed his conversation with House. As time passed, House could see the inmate's arms begin to quiver, and finally he collapsed.

He wasn't the only one suffering from heat and exhaustion. In the best of circumstances, a levee in midsummer is a place to avoid. The moist bottomland breeds mosquitoes said to be the size of horseflies. There's no shade, and the sun, reflecting off the river water, is doubly oppressive. Humidity builds, and the levee deflects any river breezes. A few workers sought relief by plunging into the water, but most of them shunned the river, unwilling to risk floating debris and ever-present water moccasins. Nightfall brought some relief, but work continued by flashlight and moonlight. Then, around midnight, someone noticed that the river's rise seemed to have slowed, and was holding steady at just under twenty-eight feet. Soon, they learned that a levee upstream had given way, easing the pressure farther south as water was siphoned off from the river onto thousands of acres in Lewis County, Missouri. It is a fact of flood life that someone else's disaster is good news downstream (a fact that has given rise, in the past, to some treacherous episodes of sabotage). At about 2 A.M., work was halted, and everybody except the prisoners and their guards retired to the Green Parrot tavern, in nearby Fall Creek. House started running an open tab, and pledged to keep it open for the duration of the flood. Forty-two thousand bags had been put in place in the last thirty-six hours.

THE reprieve was brief. On Sunday, the Fourth of July, with fireworks displays and picnics cancelled throughout the area, there was heavy rain across the region. On Tuesday morning, the National Weather Service issued a forecast that had the Mississippi cresting at Quincy the following Sunday at 31.5 feet—three feet above the record. That meant that the entire stretch of board levee had to be raised, by the addition of more boards. Peanuts had never raised a levee more than two boards high. Now he called for a raise of three boards, but he didn't know whether such a levee could actually hold. The workers desperately needed more help, and House got on his cellular phone to WGEM.

The day after the heavy downpour, Leo Henning, upon learning how much the river had risen, went in to see Ralph Oakley, the station's general manager. "This is gonna be big," Henning said, and he asked that the radio station move to twenty-four-hour coverage of the flood. Oakley, whose family owns a controlling interest in the station, readily agreed, saying that it didn't matter how much it might cost. Henning rushed to beef up his small staff, securing the services of a disgruntled ex-employee of a competing station in town, and also those of someone who'd recently left WGEM in a huff. Reporters blanketed the area, and Henning threw open the line to callers. Over a period of twenty days, the station took thirty-four thousand calls, all answered on the air with no screening. Only two callers used any profanity. One ordered pizza—the only prank the station received.

News of the revised forecast had brought calls for help from all the levee districts. None of the levees along this stretch of the river, from Lima Lake to West Quincy and below, had been built to withstand a thirty-one-and-a-half-foot wall of water. Governor James Edgar called in the National Guard, but that move initially bred ill will. Local workers say they were furious when Guard contingents reported that they were there only to "monitor" work on the levees, standing by as others did the heavy labor. Nall, among others, got through to the Governor to complain, and the Guard contingent was soon ordered into full activity. Quincy took on the appearance of a war zone, with choppers ferrying troops from the airport to their barracks, in the high-school gym, and to the levees. Heavy-transport vehicles rumbled through ordinarily quiet city streets.

Now everybody wanted the inmates. Nall got a call from Harold Knapheide, who owns Knapheide Manufacturing, a truck-bed and heavy-equipment manufacturer that is one of the area's biggest employers. Knapheide had a plant in West Quincy, Missouri, threatened by the rising water. "Bob, we're in trouble," Knapheide said. "We desperately need people. Can we get the inmates?"

Oh my God, Nall thought. It was hard enough shuttling the inmates around the Illinois side of the river, but West Quincy was in another state. Go to Missouri and abandon the Illinois taxpayers? Nall shuddered at the possible political fallout. He did make some calls, but, as he expected, the idea was scotched. So he called WGEM and issued a plea for volunteers to go to West Quincy. And that evening, when his own inmates—inmates from the county jail—returned from a twelve-hour day on the Illinois levees, he asked if any of them would volunteer to work in Missouri. To his amazement, ten of the men did. After getting them to sign hastily drafted forms stating that their participation was strictly voluntary, Nall and the inmates piled back into the sheriff's van and crossed the river, where they bagged until midnight.

The plea on WGEM had brought scores of volunteers to West Quincy, and the success of the radio appeal wasn't lost on workers at the other levees. By now, everyone in town was listening, and the radio gave city dwellers a sense that this was their fight, too—probably the first flood in recent memory of which that could be said. Many Quincians had never been to a levee, and were only dimly aware of the city's dependence on the surrounding farm areas. Because of its proximity to the river, Quincy prospered first as an agricultural center and then, after the Civil War, as an industrial base. As the city's industry grew, Quincians came to think of themselves less and less as dependent on their agricultural hinterland. Yet their demeanor—friendly, easygoing, slow-talking, genteel—betrays their river heritage and their links to the South, to cities like St. Louis and Memphis. They tend to look askance at places like Chicago, where people seem too hard-edged and aggressive. At the same time, they sometimes dismiss the local farmers, especially those from Missouri, as rednecks.

This time, however, Quincians from all walks of life responded to House's radio appeal, including two lawyer friends of House's, Mark Drummond and Jon Barnard, who worked at one of Quincy's leading law firms. Drummond, in fact, had once represented Peanuts in a legal matter, but Peanuts didn't recognize him now, dressed in work clothes for sandbagging. The lawyers found themselves alongside the prisoners, hurling sandbags. At the behest of Quincy's mayor, Chuck Scholz, a center to make sandbags was opened at Quincy University, and an appeal for labor there went out over WGEM. Thousands of volunteers showed up to shovel and bag—so many that some had to be turned away. Quincians also descended on the Salvation Army and Red Cross centers to make sandwiches. At the Sny, more than a hundred people from the city turned out, which caused some of the farmers to look at their urban neighbors in a new light. "People in Quincy, well, they'd always acted like they were above us," Crim says. "They thought they were cosmopolitan, like it was Paris or something." He admits that he came away with new respect for the city people. "They just pitched in, working real hard, like everybody else."

Almost without noticing, WGEM became a part of the story, serving as the central means of communication throughout the area. House became the unofficial correspondent reporting on the board levee: he made regular calls to update listeners, ask for help when it was needed, and also ask for supplies such as shoelaces, drill bits, and fresh water. He was given a special phone number that could put him right on the air. Other people called the station to offer services. "We've got fifteen- and sixteen-year-old girls willing to babysit down at Fifth and Cedar," Debbie from Quincy reported. A woman called to complain that the Red Cross wouldn't accept her homemade brownies, on the ground that it took only packaged food. "Ma'am, I'd just take those brownies and stand down by the levee, and I bet you won't have any trouble getting rid of them," Henning responded. He was now spending eighteen- and twenty-hour days patrolling the levees, keeping listeners updated, and coördinating the coverage. In a red tie and blue suspenders, he was easy to spot on the muddy slopes.

A constant problem at the Sny was figuring out just how high the river was at any given moment. "That's been a big fiasco," Crim says. "No one can give you any absolute river stages or elevations. You can get men on the moon, but you can't get an accurate river stage." So after the Corps of Engineers reported a nearby measure of twenty-nine feet House took a piece of lumber, sharpened one end, calibrated its length in feet and inches, and plunged it into the submerged slope of the levee, marking the level at 29. Now they had a ready measure they could rely on. It confirmed that the river was still steadily rising.

Bad as the situation looked at the Sny, it was even worse upstream, where the river would crest sooner. That day, Nall got a call asking for more inmates from a levee commissioner named Kent Deter, at the Indian Grave drainage district. "He screamed at me," Nall says. "It was barely holding. They were desperate." Nall already had his contingent of inmates at the Meyer levee, farther north, which protects the Lima Lake district. All he had left in the county jail was suspects awaiting trial who had been denied bail—some of the most dangerous criminals in the county. Nall was afraid they would escape, but he'd heard the desperation in Deter's voice. He put them in leg chains and personally escorted them up to Indian Grave to dig sand. There and at Meyer, the inmates and other workers continued to work furiously, in continuing rain, with the river rising.

Then, on Friday, July 9th, at about 5:30 P.M., a fifteen-foot-long stretch of fence backed by sandbags on the top of the Meyer levee, similar to the board levee on the Sny, keeled over from the force of two feet of water that had risen along its side. The breach quickly sucked the underlying levee into the adjoining fields, and widened to a hundred feet within two hours. Many of the workers near the site wept, including some of Nall's inmates. Others simply dropped their tools and left in silence.

AT the Sny, the river suddenly started dropping. It went down more than six inches on House's stick, easing the pressure on the workers' still uncompleted stretch. They knew that there could be only one explanation: a levee break upstream. "You really feel bad," Crim said later. "You bought some time, and maybe this will put you over the hump. But they've battled just as hard as you have, and worked just as long, and done everything they could possibly do, and they've lost. You know how you'd be if you were in that situation." But what Crim said when he heard the news confirmed was "Great. I'm going home to catch some sleep." He had been up for thirty-six hours.

In past floods, a levee break the size of Meyer's, flooding more than ten thousand acres, might well have been enough to end the crisis, sending the river level on a steady downward course, but this time it brought only a brief respite at the Sny. Because of continuing heavy rains in Iowa, the National Weather Service actually raised its crest forecast to 32.5 feet at Quincy, though it did postpone the crest date to the following Wednesday. This forecast eliminated any margin for error at the Sny, where the top board had been intended merely to provide a backsplash for waves. At thirty-two feet, that board would now have to help contain the river itself, complete with waves. Worse, after examining the height of the water and comparing it with the distance from the top of the levee, someone dared to ask whether the existing sand levee really was at the twenty-eight-foot level it was supposed to be. Careful measurement showed it to be almost a foot shy—information that nearly caused panic along its length. Crim had to issue orders for an unprecedented fourth board to be added.

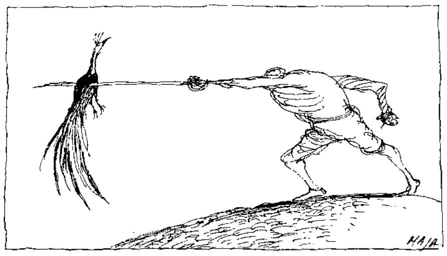
The new prediction prompted an even more intensive period of work at the Sny. WGEM broadcast another plea for help, and the National Guard brought in more troops and shifted some others. Hundreds of volunteers poured in from Quincy. They worked around the clock, under searchlights at night, and through pouring rain, which only made the heat feel worse. Most workers donned rain gear consisting of black plastic garbage bags with slits cut for their heads.

By Tuesday morning, they had just about completed the fourth board on the top of the levee. Sandbagging was well under way—about half a million bags had been put in place since the July 4th weekend—and they were working frantically to beat the crest. But then a dark bank of clouds loomed in the west, and a wind kicked in, adding to the destructive force of wave action and causing some waves to splash over the top of the new boards. "I thought we were going to lose it right there," Peanuts recalls. They'd worked through heavy rains, but now large lightning bolts began hitting the area. Some of the workers flattened themselves in the mud for protection. "I thought, If we lose even one life, it's not worth it," Crim says. Crim got on a radio to House, who was up at the north end of the levee, about two miles away. "We've got a severe storm warning, with fifty-five-mile-an-hour winds," Crim reported. "You have to get off the levee. We're getting off." After Crim gave the order, all along the levee workers abandoned their bags and shovels and started trudging back to the Brockmeyer farmhouse. National Guard troops withdrew in a convoy of military transports that clogged the narrow, submerged road back to the farm. As House plodded back along the levee, with the river looming at his ear level, only inches from the top of the boards, he faced the possibility that nothing could stop the river this time.

Later, when almost all the workers had dispersed and the rain, thunder, and lightning continued, House stood alone with Crim on the porch of the farmhouse, gazing across the waterlogged fields at the distant levee. He recognized that the river had become an obsession—that his fervent need to hold it back was something that went beyond any rational calculation of his own interests. Now he thought that he'd lost, that his work and all the thousands of man-hours of heavy labor would become meaningless in minutes. "So this is how it all ends," House said to Crim, unable to conceal the bitterness in his voice. Crim looked at him, and said nothing. He just shrugged and turned back toward the levee.

THE Meyer break on Friday had brought the national media to Quincy. When they arrived, many were pleasantly surprised. Not only was Quincy dry but it offered amenities not often found in Midwestern communities of its size. (Its population is thirty-nine thousand.) Many residents boast that Quincy was a city when Chicago was just a frontier outpost. As an old river port, it had its heyday in the mid-nineteenth century, when it was the site of one of the Lincoln-Douglas debates and served as an important stop on the Underground Railroad. Much of its architecture dates from the antebellum period. A large section of the central city is now a national historic district. Quincy has an active community theatre—Arthur Kopit's version of "The Phantom of the Opera" was on that weekend—and a symphony orchestra, in which Leo Henning played oboe for many years.

Most Quincians were of two minds about visitors from the national media. On the one hand, they were flattered by the reporters' interest and attention, and were eager to make a good impression, to show them a good time, and to be helpful. On the other hand, many of the reporters were rude, inclined to spend as little time as possible on the story, and, worst of all, error-prone. "I have to admit I was almost angry at some of them," Nall says. "We were there to work, and they were getting in the way. I said, 'Put those pencils down and start throwing some bags.' Most did, some didn't. Finally, I said to everybody, 'Look, they're just doing a job. Let's help them, let's get them to the key spots. Let's get them out of our way.' "



Exasperation may have peaked with a report by the CNN correspondent Don Knapp, who did a live broadcast from Front Street, which had flooded. Pointing to a facility surrounded by water, he warned that Quincy's water-treatment plant and drinking water were under imminent threat. In fact, he was pointing at the sewage-treatment plant; the water-treatment plant was on much higher ground, on the other side of the street, and was under no immediate threat of flooding. But worried viewers immediately began phoning WGEM, so WGEM issued its own report, assuring listeners that the water supply was safe. It was the first of many occasions on which local reporters found themselves correcting errors by others, with the result that many in Quincy came to question the accuracy of the national media on other matters, too.

In contrast, the *Times* reporter Sara Rimer, thirty-nine years old, outgoing and vivacious, quickly became a popular figure around town. Though she had never been to a levee, people admired her eagerness to learn, her thoroughness, and her accuracy. "I wanted the reporters to go away feeling they'd done more than just report, and I think Sara Rimer did," Nall says. "I respect her a lot. She got behind the tragedy and went for the human interest." Rimer also created some merriment at the Sny levee, which she visited, asking House at one point, "That Mr. Crim, he looks so powerful. Does he lift weights?" For the rest of the week, levee workers, convulsed by the idea that a farmer would lift weights, were ribbing Crim, asking him, in a mincing voice, "Do you lift weights?"

Rimer says she knew Crim's strength didn't come from the gym. "What I was struck by is that all the people in New York are pumping iron even though they push paper and answer phones. I don't want to put down New York men, but these were larger-than-life men. They were also such gentlemen. They'd carry you over a mudhole." Rimer, who is single, and the twice-divorced sheriff seemed to get along so well—he brought her a taste of some homemade deer sausages and met her at the Green Parrot—

that some of the farmers on the levee speculated that they'd make a good match.

THAT Tuesday evening, thinking that the battle for the Sny was lost, Crim and House went home for some sleep. Before nightfall, however, Peanuts ventured back to the levee. Someone called out excitedly, "Hey, Nuts, I think it's falling." Peanuts quickly confirmed that it was. It dropped about six inches in twenty minutes. Overnight, it dropped two feet. Of course, that could only mean another levee break upstream. This time, it was the Indian Grave South levee that had given way, just above Quincy, flooding about nine thousand additional acres. Work crews rushed to a second levee at Indian Grave North, but that, too, soon gave way, submerging eight thousand acres more. House's stick indicated that the river had actually brushed up against the thirty-two-foot mark during Tuesday's storm, and, against all odds, the Sny had held. Despite the breaks and the immediate reprieve, the National Weather Service renewed its prediction for a 32.5-foot crest, but put it back another day, to Thursday. "It just kept coming at us like a bouncing ball," House says.

The day after the Sny levee survived the storm and the first thirty-two-foot crest, representatives of the Army Corps of Engineers descended on the levee. According to House, a Corps of Engineers captain had been there briefly the previous Friday, and had got off to a bad start by criticizing House for the way he was building the access road. "Are you putting down mats to keep the gravel from mixing with the mud?" the captain had asked.

"No," House replied.

"That's what the Corps recommends," the captain rejoined, in what House deemed an officious tone. "We have a supply at Rock Island."

"I bet we'll have this road done before you find the matting," House countered.

On this second visit, the captain had some new suggestions. Gazing along the length of the levee, which had taken such prodigious effort to build, he said, "We need to raise that board levee."

Crim and House were stunned, but shrugged and said, "O.K., what's your suggestion?"

"Well, we've got this giant dragline, and we'll just put it down there"—he pointed to the field adjacent to the base of the levee—"and get some dirt and make a new levee." Crim rolled his eyes in disbelief. There was no dry dirt within ten miles. And, even if there had been, anyone who tried to dig at the base of the levee would have just caused water to rush up, weakening the whole structure.

Crim says, with some exasperation, "He stands there telling us this, and about that time in came a National Guard pickup and tried to pull up. He buried it. Then this character says, 'Mr. So-and-So, getting out of this truck, is an excellent dragline operator. Excellent.' Now this numb-nuts just buried his pickup in the mud. And *he's* going to run the dragline for us? I said, 'Whoa! This is a very dumb idea.' "

Shortly afterward, House says, he came upon two Corps engineers bickering about the height of the river. "I can tell you pretty close," House said. "Thirty point five."

"How do you know?" they asked skeptically. "My stick," he said, pointing into the river's flow. "I marked it." One of the engineers waded into the water. After examining the rudimentary measure, he infuriated House by pulling it out. He later replaced it with a stick of his own, using the same principle as House's, and said that it was a Corps device.

From then on, the farmers and volunteers on the levee listened politely to the Corps's suggestions and then ignored them. For what they all thought, and Peanuts actually said, was that practically all the levees upstream to which the Corps had lent its expertise had met the same fate: they broke.

THE new thirty-two-foot crest rolled through on Thursday evening, and the river stayed at just about that level all day Friday. Amazingly, the Sny, though increasingly saturated from the prolonged pressure, held. House, Crim, and the others at the levee couldn't help feeling a little euphoric. The fourth board had held. Work at the Sny now slowed somewhat, focussing on maintenance and twenty-four-hour patrol. Occasional "boils" popped up inside the levee—sudden geysers, triggered by the river's immense pressure—but Peanuts had assured everyone that as long as they ran clear they weren't undermining the structural strength of the levee. Still, they had to be contained behind rings of sandbags. And the vigilance couldn't let up, for the longer the river remained above flood level the weaker the levee became. House found that, for the first time in two weeks, he had some time to himself. Given the group's dependence on the expertise of Peanuts, he worried about the day in the future when Peanuts wouldn't be around. He thought that it would be a good idea to film their work on a video camera, in order to leave to future generations a record of how they had fought—and, God willing, defeated—the great flood of 1993.

Friday evening, House managed to get a seat on a National Guard helicopter that was patrolling the flood region from Lima Lake down to the south end of the Sny. From the air, the scope of the river's conquest was awesome. Nearly all the major levees, including several on the Missouri side of the river, had now broken. The Mississippi, normally contained in a channel less than a mile wide, was now nine miles wide in places. House trained his camera on the Sny levee as the helicopter passed it—a thin, suddenly frail-seeming bulwark, dotted with a chain of white sandbags, where workers were crawling like ants in places. The chopper crossed to the Missouri side near Hannibal, then turned north, toward West Quincy.

After Knapheide's call for emergency help, the West Quincy levee had made as much progress as the Sny, and it, too, had withstood the successive thirty-two-foot crests. Apart from a few boils, it looked strong. But House knew that the hours just after a crest are often the most dangerous ones, as the levee tries to adjust to the sudden shift in pressure. As House leaned out the open door of the chopper to get a better shot, he saw what looked like a trickle of water going over the top of the West Quincy levee. He couldn't believe his eyes. Suddenly, the trickle leaped into a torrent. He grabbed the pilot's shoulder and pointed frantically. The pilot radioed the authorities, then banked the helicopter over the levee so House could capture the break on video. Soon the grim news was on WGEM Radio, and later that night House's video was featured on television. Leo Henning, who was having a rare night off, was pulled out of the audience at the theatre's production of "Phantom," and went straight back to the station to coördinate coverage. "I ran up to the roof of the Hotel Quincy and started doing 'The War of the Worlds,' " he says. At intermission, the audience, many of whose members lived in or near West Quincy, was told of the break. Many burst into tears. As the news of the break spread, Quincians drove to vantage points along the river. Water quickly gushed west. Idle barges tethered along that side of the river were sucked into the breach, and one hit a fuel-storage tank. Oil spread over the surface of the rushing water and soon erupted in a spectacular fire. When the flames subsided, the usual lights of West Quincy had disappeared: there was only darkness. "In the end," Henning says, "it was like West Quincy wasn't even there. It was like a black pit. You could see the lights of Hannibal, the lights of Quincy, the lights of Canton, but over there it was just jet black."

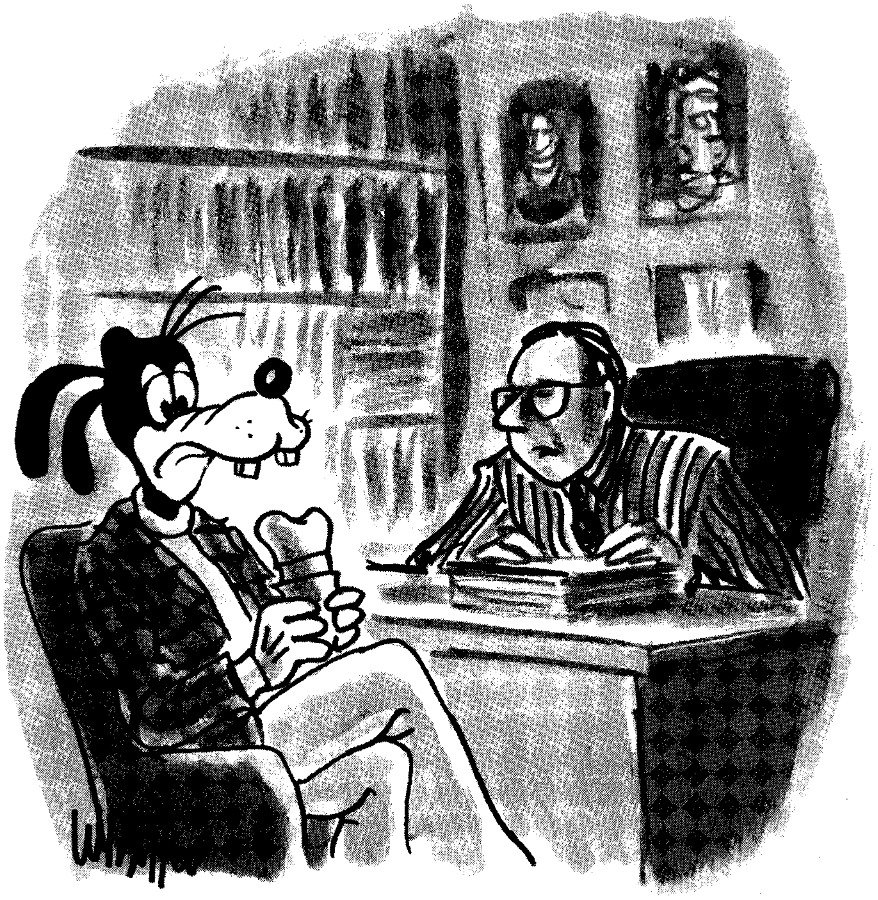
The Bayview Bridge, the last link between Quincy and Missouri, was closed immediately. Now there was no bridge crossing open between Burlington, Iowa, and St. Louis, a stretch of over two hundred miles. Greater Quincy was suddenly isolated from about forty per cent of its population, many of whom worked in, shopped in, and used the services of Quincy. The economic disruption was immediate and painful. More than any of the other levee breaks, the West Quincy disaster hit hard. Not just among the levee workers but throughout Quincy, a collective sense of despair seemed to replace the near-euphoric mood of coöperative enterprise. "It's devastating," Nall says. "You've done everything, and then you lose. You're let down, depressed. I talk to people, and they ask, 'Could we have worked harder? Was it our fault?' They felt so bad."

Nall himself was in his patrol car, coming home from the grocery store, when he heard the news on WGEM. Then the city police radioed him. As soon as he got home, he flipped the television on and saw House's footage of the break. "I felt like packing it in," Nall says. "Shit, it's over now." But he went back to his car and headed for the Sny, the last major levee still standing. West Quincy, of course, had brought the Sny another reprieve—the river dropped two feet almost immediately—but anxious workers, including Crim and Peanuts, had gathered there to discuss the implications of this latest break upstream. They were soon joined by Nall, and they vowed not to let up, and to keep fighting to hold off the river. Nall says that the people there gave him renewed inspiration. "We still had the Sny," he says, "and as long as we had the Sny we hadn't lost."

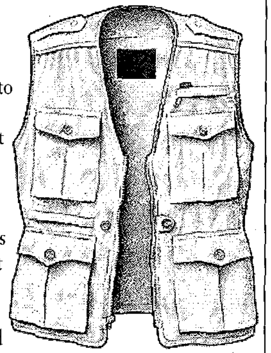
Quincians were also bolstered the next day by a phone call to WGEM. Steve Cramblit, a sales manager turned reporter, answered the phone at about 8:30 A.M., and an operator said, "This is Air Force One calling. Will you take the call?" Cramblit was so astonished that at first he thought the operator was asking him to pay for the call—would Air Force One call collect? Then an aide got on the phone, and said, "The President would like to be on your radio station." Henning was connected via his car phone but opted to let his reporters in the studio handle the interview. Cramblit and three of his colleagues gathered in the studio, and at about nine-fifteen President Clinton, speaking from his plane en route to a governors' conference in St. Louis, came on the air. "I wanted to call you," the President said, "because your radio station has done such a remarkable job of coördinating the information, keeping people in touch, and keeping them up in the middle of this. I really respect your effort and appreciate it very much." One reporter, Rich Cain, mentioned how exhausted the National Guard troops and volunteers were, and asked if Clinton had considered bringing in federal troops—an idea that Clinton later broached in St. Louis. When the interview was over, the veteran reporter Bob Turek told Henning it had been the proudest moment of his career. "I've done City Council meetings and zoning meetings and lost dogs for forty years," he said. "Finally, I got to say, 'Thank you, Mr. President.' "

As Nall watched WGEM's coverage of the West Quincy break, he had a nagging feeling that something wasn't right. One of the first people interviewed by Michelle McCormack, the WGEM reporter in West Quincy, was a slight young man who claimed to have been near the site of the break and to have warned unnamed "brass" that dangerous boils were present. No one had taken him seriously, he said.

Minutes later, Nall got a call from a



"I found your 'Walter Dearest' most interesting, but I must tell you that another biography of Disney has just been published."



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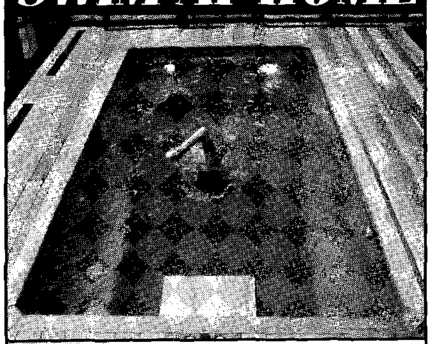

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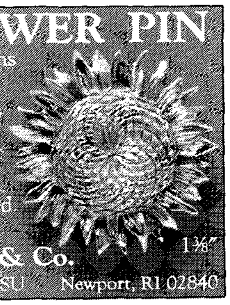

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county probation officer. The person he'd seen on TV, the officer said, had been released from prison after serving three and a half years of a seven-year term for arson. His plea had been guilty by reason of mental illness; in other words, he was some kind of disaster freak. Nall put his force and the city police on alert, saying that he wanted the man held for questioning. "I said, 'Grab this S.O.B.,' " Nall recalls.

When Nall reached the suspect at his home the next night, he said he was on his way to board a shuttle bus to the Sny. "I told him, 'I don't want to catch you anywhere near the Sny,' " Nall says.

Rumors immediately coursing throughout Quincy accurately reported the suspicion of sabotage and the identity of the suspect. There seemed to be a collective eagerness to abandon the presumption of innocence—a sense that somehow, if it could be shown that the workers had been betrayed by one of their own, they had not been defeated by the river itself.

At the Sny, news of the investigation led to increased patrols and a heightened sense of vigilance. House, Crim, and the others there recognized how easy it would be for one person with a shovel to undo their efforts; on the other hand, the force of the river was a constant presence just over their shoulders, and perhaps made them a little less willing to jump to conclusions. Nor did these developments, exciting though they were, interrupt the routine of holding off the river. Day after day, night after night, a band of farmers kept watch, sitting under a makeshift canopy of boards and plastic sheets, measuring the river's progress.

"A LOT of people think the trouble's over, because we withstood the thirty-two feet, and there's nothing to do but monitor around the clock," Crim told me. "But you're still dealing with a thirty-foot river. If you'd ever told me I'd be sitting here hoping for a twenty-eight-foot river, I'd have said you were crazy. But now here I am. We're a long way from being out of the woods."

Sheriff Nall, too, warned that no one should get complacent; tears welled in his eyes as he described the destruction he had already witnessed, from Meyer to West Quincy. He said the experience had helped change the way he viewed his job. "My focus used to be, How many can we arrest and how many can we put away?" he said. "After twenty years, I'm thinking more, *How can I help the community?* What can I do?"

Late that week, an unsettling calm settled over the Sny Basin. The river began to creep lower, but, a week after the West Quincy break, it still held at something over thirty feet. Virtually all the farmhouses were now deserted, their usually neat lawns overgrown from the heavy rains, an occasional lawn ornament rising from them into the still, humid air. In place of the usual lively farmyard cacophony were empty barns and feeders. Magnificent stands of corn and soybeans stretched in waves toward the high ground in the distance. Gazing over the fertile expanse, Crim mused on the struggle. "Even if, God forbid, this thing breaks and floods, there will come a time when the water will all disappear," he said. "Some of the people will be back. I don't know if I'll be back, but the time will come, somewhere down the road, when everybody can move back. You'll pick things up and try to put them back together." Then he shrugged, and said he tries to stay philosophical. "We've done everything we know how to do. Evidently, we've done something right, wouldn't you say? We're one of the few still standing."

THAT weekend, the rains resumed, and slowly the river began to rise again. On Sunday the twenty-fifth, at 11:20 A.M., the Sny levee gave way from its base at a point right next to House's farm and Crim's house. By the end of the day, an area three times the size of Manhattan was inundated to depths of up to fifteen feet. The instant House and Crim heard on the radio that the Sny was weakening and might give way, they rushed to Peanuts' house to save what they could of his remaining belongings. Then they hurried to Crim's house to save his refrigerator. Even as they unplugged it, they saw water rushing toward them. They abandoned the effort, stranding the refrigerator in the middle of the kitchen, ran to the pickup, and sped out with the flood close behind them. Within minutes, the house and the farm were submerged. When they parted, on higher ground, House shook Crim's hand. "We fought the good fight," he said, for the board levee, their levee, never failed. Its thin line of boards and white bags can still be seen snaking across the surface of the vast, placid inland lake. ♦

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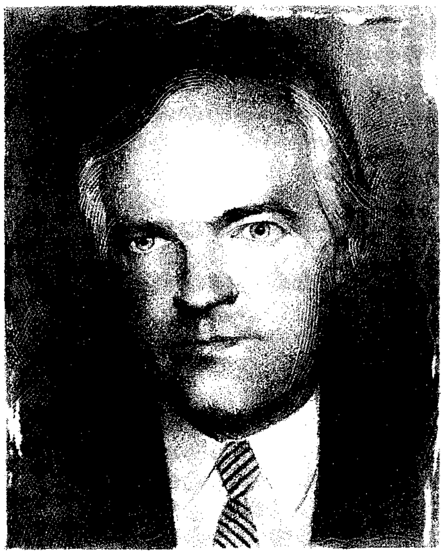
LETTER FROM WASHINGTON

THE SUICIDE

The answers to Vincent Foster's death may lie in the tragic evidence of steps he was taking to try to save his own life.

BY SIDNEY BLUMENTHAL

MORE than two hundred members of the White House staff were crammed into Room 450 in the Old Executive Office Building, waiting in uncharacteristic near-silence for the President to arrive. The President is always received with a standing ovation. This time, everyone stood, but no one applauded. "No one can ever know why this happened," Bill Clinton said about the suicide of the deputy legal counsel and personal attorney to the Clintons, Vincent W. Foster, Jr., who had been Clinton's childhood friend in Hope, Arkansas. "What happened was a mystery about something inside of him. This should teach us all a little humility."



"Those of you who do not have your life planned out, don't worry," Foster told Arkansas Law School graduates. "It wouldn't turn out the way you planned it in any event."

On July 20th, six months to the day after the Inauguration, Foster had stood in the Rose Garden as Judge Louis Freeh was formally appointed director of the F.B.I. Then, after eating lunch at his desk, Foster left his office, saying that he would be back later. "Is he back yet?" Bernard Nussbaum, the legal counsel, inquired several times throughout the afternoon. Foster drove to Fort Marcy Park, in Virginia, overlooking the Potomac, where he took off his jacket and tie, stationed himself near a Civil War cannon, cocked a 1913 Colt revolver, and shot himself in the mouth. There was a stagy quality to his irrational act. Foster was an exacting man, but he demanded perfection of no one more than of himself, and he was soft-spoken and courteous to a fault. However impulsively, he had arranged a dramatic death, surrounded by the atmospherics of a Southern cavalier. "There was a porcelain quality to Vince," one of his colleagues said. He was gleaming, pure, and, to everyone's shock, extraordinarily fragile.

"Of a thousand people, of those who *might* commit suicide, I would never pick Vince," Hillary Clinton said the day after Foster's death, according to a friend she spoke with. Yet, even as Foster's friends found his death inexplicable, they speculated about the debilitating effects of his Washington experience. "The town has now killed somebody," one said. "He was torn up. He carried it all inside." An Arkansan who came to Washington to work in the Administration said, "I'm afraid it might have been the pressures of this terrible town. I have found it unpleasant. I have found the press awful. Who knows how it affects someone?" Another friend of Foster's said, "I don't want to think somebody that fine can be toppled by Washington, by the press, by the hounds." The television producer and Clinton friend, Harry Thomason, who had got tangled in the misbegotten travel-department affair, remarked of Foster, "He was a brilliant attorney, but unprepared." Thomason added, "Washington is a giant Elks Club with a lot of secret handshakes—who could be prepared? Here's the one thing I do know:

RAUL COLON

if he were in Arkansas, he'd be alive." One of Foster's colleagues reflected, "Washington didn't kill Vince, but it was an accomplice. There's not a person I know in Little Rock who doesn't believe he'd be alive today if he were in Little Rock. The stress, the exhaustion, the disorientation of Washington leave you without the support you need. There is hardly a worse place to experience depression than the place Vince was in."

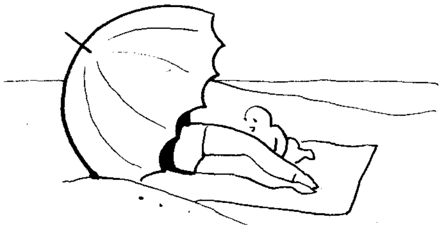
In the immediate aftermath of Foster's suicide, people in Washington frantically, and predictably, searched for reasons. But any rationale would have to fit within the confines of the capital's particular, narrow logic. Something dark, something other than psychological problems, must lie beneath the surface, it was speculated. There must be another story—one that makes more sense than acute depression. There must be a coverup. What was Foster's *real* motive?

Rumors whipped through the city. The Washington *Times*, it was said, had for some while been preparing a story that would explain all. Perhaps Foster had even known of the terrible exposé that was coming and had sought to preëmpt it by killing himself. Was he a closet homosexual? Had he attempted a gay liaison at Fort Marcy Park and been spurned? Or would the Washington *Times* publish a story about his having had a secret affair with his former law partner Hillary Rodham Clinton? One version had it that the latter story would be published in four parts. (The right-wing newspaper is one of the oddities of Washington. It is owned by the organization of the Reverend Sun Myung Moon, a self-proclaimed messiah. Its circulation is low, but it sometimes manages to lodge fragments of facts and factoids, like shrapnel, in the public debate.) A reporter for the New York *Times* called the Washington *Times* seeking information, and wrote that a reporter for the Moonie paper "acknowledged that he had made preliminary inquiries" about Foster. The next day, July 23rd, the Washington *Times* published an editorial headlined "THERE WAS NO VINCENT FOSTER STORY." "The Washington *Times*," it said, "had nothing on Mr. Foster and was not in the process of developing anything. Zero." No other hidden subtext was discovered by anyone else.

But Foster's disequilibrium wasn't so well hidden from those closest to him. By early July, his friends had begun to notice changes in his appearance and behavior. Though he was naturally reserved, he was more distant than anyone could recall. He had lost fifteen pounds. His wife, Lisa, told a friend he was sleeping fitfully. So his friends tried to cheer him up. On the weekend of July 17th, Web and Suzanne Hubbell took Vince and Lisa Foster on a trip to the eastern shore of Maryland. On the evening of Monday, July 19th, Clinton called Foster at home and they talked for about twenty minutes—a routine call, mostly about work, the President explained later, though he also invited Foster to come to the White House and watch a movie. Foster declined. It was left that they would meet on Wednesday, Clinton said.

The following afternoon, Foster walked out of the office and made his way to Fort Marcy. A week after his body was found, Justice Department investigators discovered a list of psychiatrists' names and telephone numbers in his handwriting. The *Times* reported that Foster had spent weekends closeted in his darkened bedroom and that his Little Rock doctor had sent him antidepressants only days before his suicide. An associate found, in Foster's briefcase, a note that he had torn into pieces; after a thirty-hour delay, it was turned over to investigators. "If one did not know Vince had committed suicide," Chief of Staff McLarty said, "one could conclude it was a series of arguments on why the job was going badly, that he was going to resign."

Even in May, Foster appeared to be struggling with self-doubt when he made a seemingly triumphant return to the University of Arkansas Law School to give the commencement address. Twenty-two years ago, although he was first in his class, he had not attended his own graduation. Now he was the distinguished alumnus, an intimate of the President, come to dispense his wisdom and be honored. His speech, however, contained moments of poignant reflection and regret. He had been "wrong" to skip his graduation two decades ago. "We would have benefitted from one last celebration with our professors and our friends and families. . . . This invitation has caused me to stop from this hectic and challenging adventure I am on in Washington to think about the roads I have travelled to get there and the roads I wish I had travelled." Reputation, he warned, was all: "The reputation you develop for intellectual and ethical integrity will be your greatest asset or your worst enemy. . . . Treat every pleading, every brief, every contract, every letter, every daily task as if your career will be judged on it. . . . I cannot make this point to you too strongly. There is no victory, no advantage, no fee, no favor which is worth even a blemish on your reputation for intellect and integrity. Nothing travels faster than an accusation that another lawyer's word is no good. . . . Dents to the reputation in the legal profession are irreparable." Failure in this respect was simply inexcusable. "Yet," he remarked, "there will also be failures, and criticisms and bad press and lies, stormy days and cloudy days, and you will not survive them without the support of those same spouses, law partners, and friends." He observed that "no one was ever heard to say on their deathbed, 'I wish I had spent more time at the office.' . . . The office can wait. . . . If you find yourself getting burned out or unfulfilled, unappreciated . . . then have the courage to make a change." He counselled, "Those of you who do not have your life planned out, don't worry. It wouldn't turn out the way you planned it in any event."



VINCENT FOSTER'S father, who was a real-estate broker in Hope, was known to children as the Fascinator, for his abilities as a storyteller. Young Vince did not inherit his father's crowd-pleasing magnetism. According to those who knew him, he was always quiet, but was acknowledged as one of those most likely to succeed. At Hope High School, he became student-body president. (The following year, Mack McLarty was the president.) Foster attended Davidson College, a small liberal-arts school in North Carolina, where he majored in psychology, then went on to the University of Arkansas Law School. In 1971, he achieved the highest score on the state bar exam, and was immediately recruited by the Rose Law Firm, which had been founded in 1820, sixteen years before Arkansas became a state. Though it was among the most distinguished firms in Little Rock, in 1971 it had just nine partners. Over the next twenty years, Foster was instrumental in its expansion, both as a litigator and as its chief operating officer. He handled the accounts of some of the largest corporations in Arkansas, including Stephens, Inc., the bond-trading house, and he also served as outside counsel to Wright, Lindsey & Jennings, one of the other major firms in town. (Bill Clinton, after losing the 1980 race for governor, worked for two years at that firm, with his friend Bruce Lindsey, who is now the director of White House personnel.) There are only three Little Rock firms with as many lawyers on their rosters as Rose, which by last year had fifty-five.

"If I had a son, I'd be proud to have him," Phillip Carroll, a senior partner at the firm, who was Foster's mentor, said two days after the suicide. "We've helped raise his children. Lisa, his wife, is close to us. Vince was just such a fine young man. Very reticent, quiet. We might ride home in the car together and not say a word the whole way home. Very quiet and collected. A beautiful writer. His research ability was so splendid. His legal briefs were masterpieces. He handled important cases here at the firm, and was subjected to stress many times. He was as cool as a cucumber. I would have entrusted anything to Vince."

Hillary Clinton came to Rose in 1977. According to Carroll, her closest associates were Foster and Webster Hubbell, who, together with the senior partner, were the heart of the litigation section. On the third floor of the Rose Building, a converted Y.W.C.A., the three young attorneys occupied corner offices. Hubbell, who had been a tackle for the University of Arkansas football team, was from 1979 to 1981 the mayor of Little Rock, and in 1984, to fill a temporary vacancy, Governor Clinton appointed him chief justice of the State Supreme Court. "In contrast to Hubbell's blustery manner, Foster's style is much more corporate," an article in *The American Lawyer* on the Rose firm reported. "His office, down the hall from Hubbell's, is a large brown room with brown carpeting and brown curtains. Foster himself is outfitted in a brown suit and wearing brown-rimmed glasses with a painstakingly placed handkerchief peeking out of his breast pocket." Many later called him "a rock"—reliable, protective, and secure. Hillary Clinton came to depend upon him as a personal confidant.

Foster was widely considered "a tough lawyer," a longtime friend of his told me. Mark Grobmyer, a principal partner at another of the large Little Rock firms, Arnold, Grobmyer & Haley, and a friend of both the Clintons and Foster, said, "He was used to winning cases and losing cases. He was used to adversity. It didn't seem to get him down." Foster prided himself on his understanding of character. "The psychology major has probably been as much help in being a good lawyer as anything else, in dealing with people and having some ability to predict how people will react to different types of presentations," he told the Arkansas *Democrat Gazette* in 1988. He was not immersed in politics, although, of course, he supported Bill Clinton. Rather, he devoted much of his personal time to his role as the chairman of the board of the Arkansas Repertory Theatre. He was especially proud of its performances of Broadway dramas, such as " 'Night, Mother" and "Agnes of God." For the *Democrat Gazette*, which published a profile of him in his capacity as patron of the arts, he composed a self-portrait. Among the self-descriptions were:

MY FANTASY IS—I've always fantasized going off to the mountains of Colorado and writing a great novel in seclusion.

PEOPLE WHO KNEW ME IN HIGH SCHOOL THOUGHT I WAS—A very serious student.

IF I WEREN'T A PRACTICING LAWYER, I'D LOVE TO—Teach law.

MAJOR ACCOMPLISHMENT—I've earned a good reputation among my peers as a trial lawyer, and I'm very proud of that.

TO SUM ME UP, I'M—Demanding, but fair.

Although Foster was a devoted Clinton supporter, he was not a player in the Presidential campaign. When Clinton won, however, he was quickly appointed deputy legal counsel; in fact, Foster received his job even before Nussbaum was named chief counsel. Foster had never lived outside the South, or even in a big city. He was a paragon

who wears khakis?

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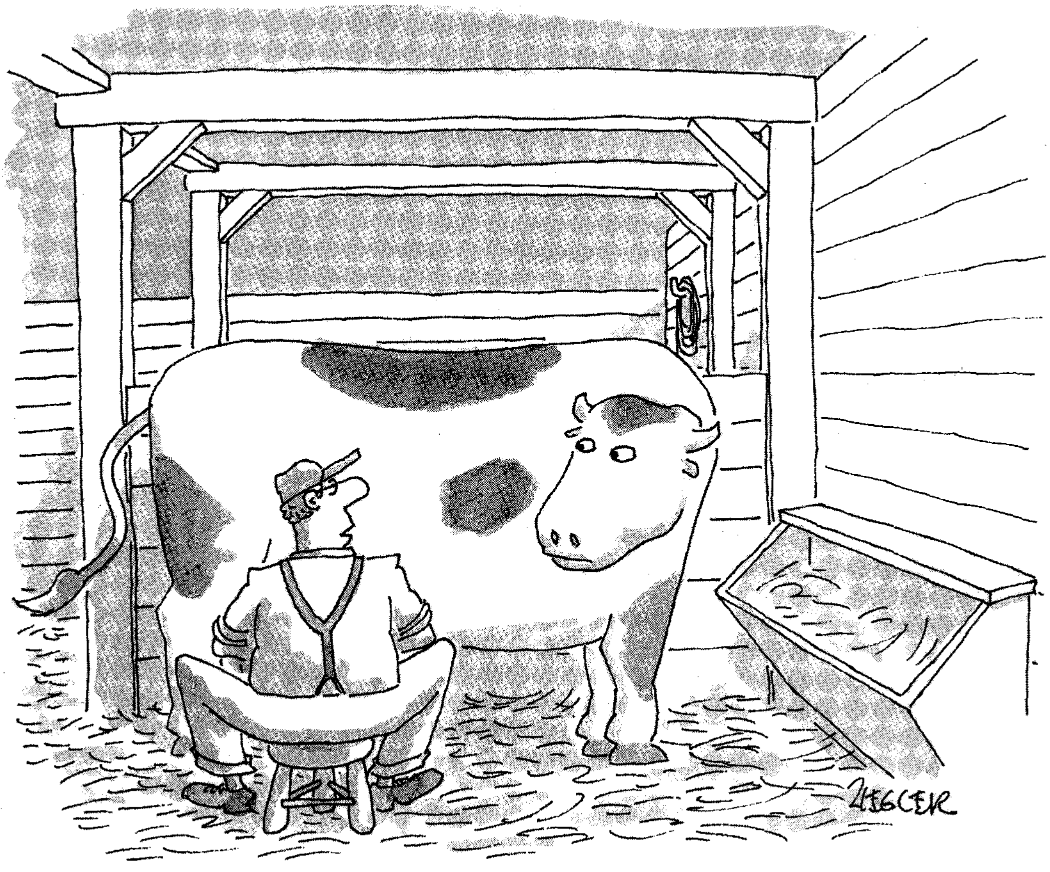
of a little establishment now headed for the national center. "I'm very honored," he told the Hope *Star*. "The real thrill, besides the honor, is the opportunity to be of assistance to the Clintons, who have been good friends of mine, and to Mack McLarty." Standing in front of the White House early in the year, Foster said to a television reporter of his three children, "I'd like to think they're a little bit proud of their dad." In his new office he prominently placed a framed photograph of pupils of Miss Mary's kindergarten in Hope, which showed the future President, the future chief of staff, and the future deputy counsel posing for the camera.

Every President surrounds himself with his own familiar circle. Jefferson had Madison and Monroe, Kennedy his Irish mafia, and Reagan his California ideologues. Of the Arkansans in significant positions, Foster had the least political experience. He believed that he had been summoned to serve, and he had a vision of Washington that was abstract and idealistic. "There's a great spirit of public service commitment that I didn't sense, perhaps even going back to the Kennedy years," he told the Arkansas *Democrat Gazette* shortly after he arrived.

The concept of service has little political currency in Washington. Everyone is fair game, simply for being on the other side. Humiliating one's prey, not merely defeating one's foes, is central to the process. The press is hardly an impartial referee; rather, it is often caught up in a blindered game of chase. Vince Foster was not the first member of the Clinton Administration to get ensnared in partisan warfare. When Janet Reno was nominated to be Attorney General and when Bruce Babbitt, the Secretary of the Interior, was being considered by the President for the Supreme Court, both were smeared by innuendo spread by the right wing. When Hubbell was nominated as Associate Attorney General, he was subjected to a ritual hazing.

But Foster had a hard time acclimating himself. He came to town alone, with his family to follow later. The brief separation and uprooting were, according to Phillip Carroll, "a traumatic move." A Washington colleague described it as "disorienting." Foster worked fourteen- and sixteen-hour days and had a limited social life. Within the counsel's office, there was "no order, no procedure," one of those who worked there has said. A new system for a new Administration had to be created overnight. Crisis struck at the start, with the Zoë Baird affair, and other crises followed: the Kimba Wood affair, the travel-department affair, the Lani Guinier affair. Though Foster had only a tangential relationship to these incidents, he considered himself "responsible," according to a colleague. As always, Hillary Clinton relied on him for advice. When she was sued for keeping the meetings of her health-care task force private, Foster provided the legal brief. Under these and other strains, members of the White House staff needed an outlet, and Vince Foster, for some, was it. "He was a guy everybody went to," one Presidential assistant said. " 'Talk it over with Vince. He'll know how to deal with this.' Being forty-eight, he was one of the oldest people around here. Very sage."

Almost as soon as Foster began doing his job, he became a public target. He was singled out by the editorial page of the *Wall Street Journal*, which is edited by Robert Bartley and is to the conservative movement what the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith is to the Vatican, laying down dogma and censuring dissenters. The lawyers of the Rose Law Firm were cast by the *Journal* as a kind of secretive cabal operating "at the heart" of the Clinton Administration. They were "the legal cronies from Little Rock," "the Clinton crew," "the Rose clique." Getting at Foster was a way of getting at Hillary Clinton. His briefs on her behalf were labelled "legal corner-cutting that leads to trouble," and the *Journal* asserted that "Mrs. Clinton has violated the law." "WHO IS VINCENT FOSTER?" was the headline on the lead editorial of June 17th. The piece discussed the need "to get the Clinton Crowd to obey the law." Foster, for his part, delayed in providing a photograph for the



"By the way, dollface, nice hooters."

editorial. Instead, a silhouette of a man with a bold question mark on his blank face appeared as the illustration. Eventually, Foster did supply a photograph, and a drawing from it accompanied another editorial, headlined "VINCENT FOSTER'S VICTORY," on June 24th, after his case on behalf of Mrs. Clinton won in court. "Alas, the Clintonites, as is their wont, again allowed hubris to smother mere principle," the *Journal* opined. In a non sequitur, presumably having to do with executive power, it went on, "As for Iran-Contra, we suspect that Vincent Foster and Ollie North might hit it off."

To his colleagues in the counsel's office Foster read the line aloud and laughed. He said, according to one of them, "The next thing you know, I'll be running Ollie North's Senate campaign in Virginia."

But the drip of acid on his reputation bothered Foster. "I tried to tell him," a Presidential assistant said. "They are what they are." "He was pretty stoic about the attacks externally," another of his colleagues said. "But there's no question that it got to him. He felt very embarrassed. You and I laugh off the editorial page of the *Wall Street Journal.* Vince Foster would not. It is what is read in Little Rock by the really serious people who run the corporations and businesses. There's probably no more respected publication among the professional, legal, and business communities. He knows that his professional and business friends won't understand. There couldn't be a more serious blemish."

Foster sought perspective through a number of conversations with Walter Pincus, a reporter for the Washington *Post*, whose wife is from Little Rock. "He couldn't understand why the press was the way it was," Pincus said. "It was a sense that people would print something that was wrong, and that other people would repeat it. I'd say, 'You can't let the press run you, get your goat; you have to go on. This is how the game is played.' He'd say, 'Fine.' "

Foster had thought of the legal counsel's office as a small law firm serving two very special clients, the President and the First Lady. (He helped set up a blind trust for them when Clinton was elected.) According to several people close to him, he began to feel that the difficulties encountered by the President were his personal failings. No matter what he did, he could not protect his clients. "He was a master of his own destiny who became focussed on his own failure," one friend said.

"He was too exhausted to gain any perspective," said another. "Then you pick up the paper and, yes, it tells you you are worthless." Foster believed that his job was to protect the Clintons, but he couldn't do it, and he was trapped in a place that couldn't protect him.

Still, he maintained his cool façade. "He came down to Little Rock one time," Carroll recalled. "He said that Washington was different—that you had to act instinctively. It wasn't like going to the law library. It was a different kind of practice."

Foster's suicide prompted his critics to a display of self-exculpation. On the day of Vince Foster's funeral, in Hope, the *Wall Street Journal* ran yet another lead editorial, this one headed "A WASHINGTON DEATH." It read:

> All Americans have a legitimate interest in the inner workings of an administration governing them. If anything, Mr. Foster's tragic death adds to the curiosity. . . . As of yesterday, no one was able to offer a persuasive reason why he would have taken his own life . . .
>
> We had our disagreements with Mr. Foster during his short term in Washington, but we do not think that in death he deserves to disappear into a cloud of mystery that we are somehow ordained never to understand. The American public is entitled to know if Mr. Foster's death was somehow connected to his high office. If he was driven to take his life by purely personal despair, a serious investigation should share this conclusion so that he can be appropriately mourned.

"He was such a wonderful human being," Betsey Wright, who was a Clinton chief of staff in Arkansas, said a few days after the funeral. "It is so heartbreaking. He absorbed people's problems and took responsibility for them. I'm like everyone else who talked to Vince, wondering what signal I should have picked up that I didn't. I believe my friend was very ill and none of us knew it. If he could get this kind of illness, I guess I think this could have happened to Vince if he had stayed in the Rose Law Firm." But that must remain a sadly comforting thought: it did not happen in Little Rock. ♦

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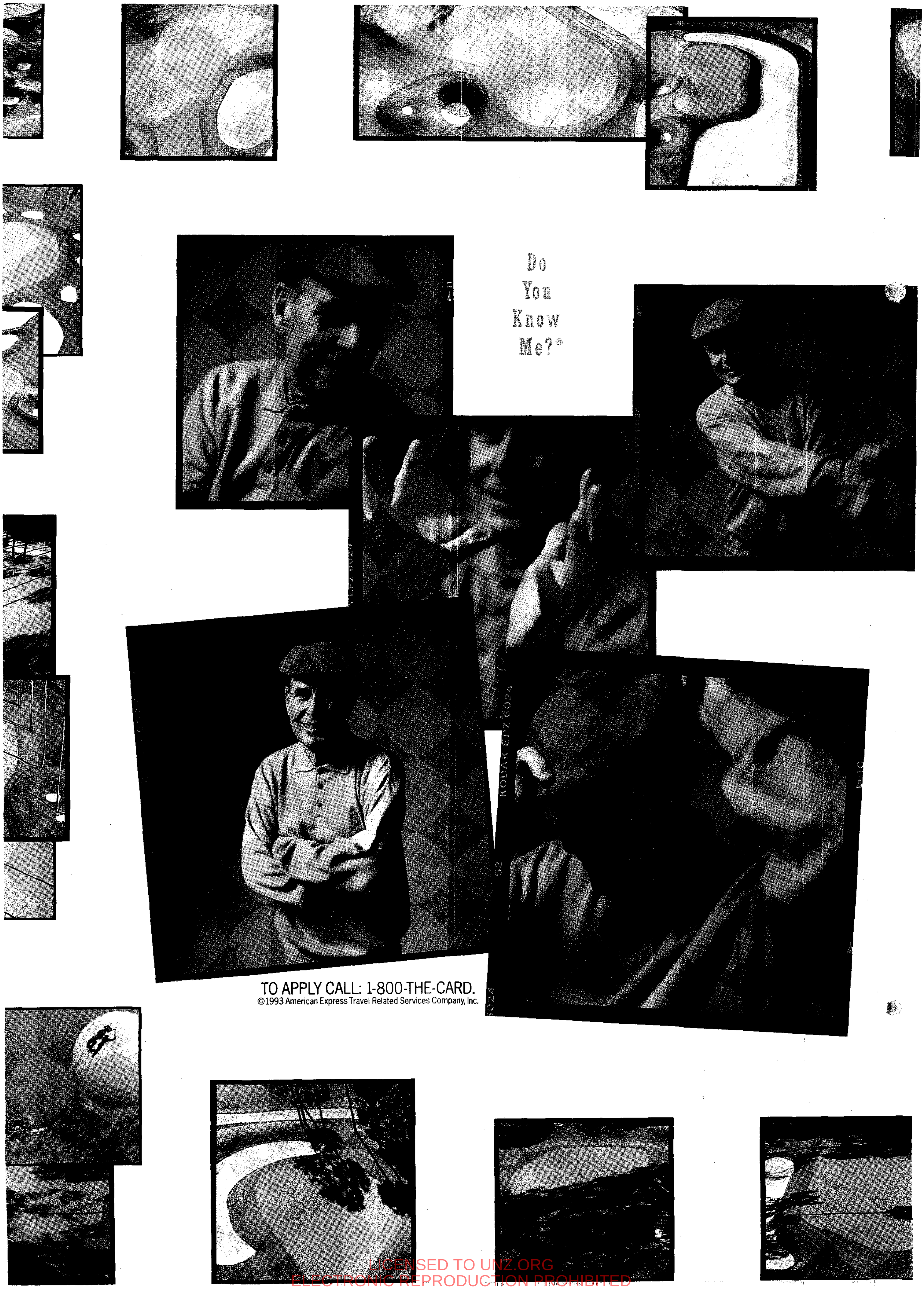
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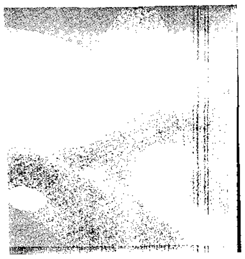

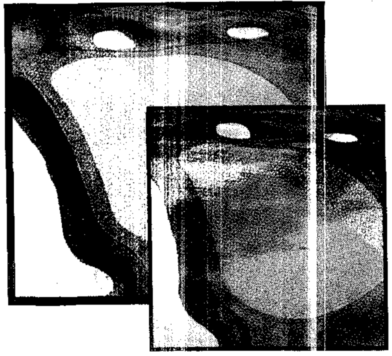
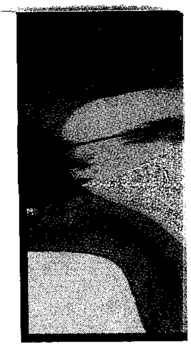
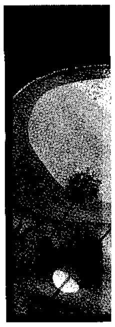

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I've bu[illegible] about 6[illegible] golf courses since I started [illegible] in 196[illegible] [illegible] course, [illegible] what's [illegible] I walk the land to get a feel for it, because I make all my designs in the dirt. I don't know how to punch a computer and I'm too old to learn.

Golf is a mental game, and golfers are always nervous. So I constantly try to work on their idea of how a hole ought to be played. Nowadays the only ally I have is water; that's the only hazard they can't recover from. Sand [illegible] but if you [illegible] water you know wh[illegible] have down there. People say there's a lot of water on the Tournament Players Club,® and that's true, but then there are a lot of good golfers out there too.

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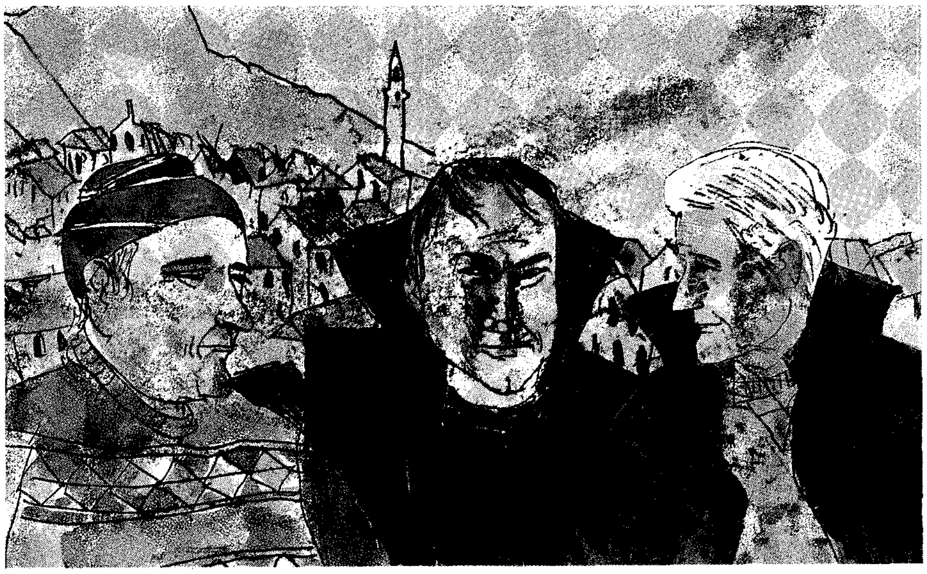
A REPORTER AT LARGE

THE MISSION OF DR. CHAOS

Last Christmas, an unlikely group composed of the former race-car driver Michael Walleczek, the actor Klaus Maria Brandauer, and the Austrian physician Helmut Wihan drove a truckload of relief supplies into the Bosnian war zone. Wihan has led many such missions, but his colleagues worry that he is taking on too much of the burden of this Holocaust—and of the last.

BY TIMOTHY W. RYBACK

SHORTLY before midnight last Christmas Day, a gray Jeep Cherokee using only parking lights for illumination worked its way along a single-lane road in the snow-covered hills above Sarajevo. The Jeep, which carried a load of medical supplies, including large quantities of morphine, was driven by Michael Walleczek, a business consultant from the ski resort of Kitzbühel, in the Austrian Alps. Helmut Wihan, a Salzburg physician who had organized the medical delivery, sat in the back. In the passenger's seat was their friend the Austrian actor Klaus Maria Brandauer.



Walleczek, Brandauer, and Wihan: The three men were just outside Sarajevo when they heard machine-gun fire and Brandauer gasped, "They're aiming at us!"

ROBERT ANDREW PARKER

The men had left the Bosnian-held city of Mostar, which had been devastated earlier in the year by months of relentless Serbian gunfire, at about three o'clock that afternoon, and had begun the final leg of the trip to Sarajevo, eighty-five miles to the northeast. They had been advised to drive as fast as possible through this region—at some points, the road passed within a mile of Serbian positions—and had therefore decided that Walleczek, a former race-car driver, should take the wheel. They covered the first fifty-five miles without incident, moving through a canyon of striking beauty, and occasionally passing the wrecks of cars that had come under Serbian gunfire. By the time they reached the town of Jablanica, thirty miles from Sarajevo, night had fallen.

In Jablanica, Walleczek, Wihan, and Brandauer learned that the regular road into Sarajevo was impassable, and were directed by Bosnian soldiers to an alternative route, a single-lane gravel road that led over Mt. Igman, on the western edge of Sarajevo, to the city's airport. (It was this route that the Serb forces besieging Sarajevo attempted to cut off two weeks ago, in an unsuccessful assault on Mt. Igman.) The soldiers told them that the road passed through a zone of intense sniper activity, so they should proceed with only their parking lights on, to avoid attracting enemy fire.

With Walleczek still at the wheel, they headed up the mountain road. Soon they saw a military vehicle ahead of them. Wihan, who had been making regular trips to Sarajevo since last summer, recognized the vehicle as that of a local Bosnian military commander. The officer, who said he was on his way to a nearby Bosnian emplacement, accompanied them for a couple of miles, then stopped off at a command post. His last word of advice, Wihan says, was to turn off their parking lights.

The extreme darkness, the narrowness of the road, and the lateness of the hour conspired to keep the men from heeding the commander's warning. But, even with the parking lights on, Walleczek had to lean out the window in order to see, because the light from the dashboard reflected in the windshield. Every twenty minutes or so, soldiers emerged from the blackness and stopped the vehicle. They were the advance posts of the Bosnian lines.

Just after Wihan, Walleczek, and Brandauer had crossed the crest of Mt. Igman, the dense forest opened briefly to provide a dramatic view of the ski jump used during the 1984 Winter Olympics. Beyond the jump lay the city of Sarajevo. Rocket fire, tracer bullets, and flares cut paths of light over the airport. Walleczek recalls it as a scene of eerie beauty. From the woods below them they heard the occasional rattle of small-arms fire and the rumble of mortar and artillery shells.

As the road began to descend, Walleczek was forced to put his foot on the brake. The rear brake lights flashed, throwing a small halo of red light into the dark forest. Suddenly, machine-gun fire broke out in the trees. Wihan describes the sound as a steady but muted *tak tak tak tak tak.* Bullets began kicking up the gravel along the roadside. Walleczek lifted his foot from the brake pedal and continued down the road, but it was too late. A series of flares—one, then a pause, then five in rapid succession—lit the sky directly overhead. The flares cast a dull-red wash over the Jeep, the road, and the surrounding woods. "*Das gilt uns!*" gasped Brandauer, who until then had sat silent, smoking a cigarette. "They're aiming at us!" An instant later, a massive rocket detonation shook the forest, jolting the Jeep and drawing the three men into an enveloping vacuum. They were under fire.

UNTIL that moment, the journey to Sarajevo had seemed as much an adventure as a mission. On the morning of December 23rd, Wihan, Walleczek, and Brandauer had left Kitzbühel for Bosnia in the Jeep Cherokee, accompanied by a large truck filled with a thousand wool blankets, a hundred pairs of insulated boots, ten tons of food, and eleven thousand square metres of rolled plastic sheeting. With winter upon the region, this last item, the most efficient substitute for bomb-shattered windows, was in desperately short supply.

The small convoy drove across Austria, through Slovenia and Croatia, to the Adriatic Sea, where it continued along the coast to Split, then turned inland, entering Bosnia at the town of Posušje. The men alternated driving the Jeep and the truck, and passed the time telling stories, occasionally singing, and listening to renderings by Brandauer of passages from Shakespeare. They spent Christmas Eve at a Franciscan monastery near Posušje, and the next morning drove to Mostar, where the truck's contents were unloaded at a Catholic church. The three men left the truck in Mostar and proceeded to Sarajevo in the Jeep, with its supply of morphine.

Wihan, who had obtained the precious cargo, was intent on personally making the delivery to the University Clinic, one of the few hospitals still functioning in Sarajevo. He had been to the region often enough to know that many of the medical supplies that the United Nations and other international relief organizations were trying to deliver were either being confiscated at Serb and Croatian checkpoints or disappearing along United Nations channels and finding their way onto the black market.

Two previous attempts by Wihan and Brandauer to deliver morphine to Sarajevo had failed. In October, Croatian forces had seized a shipment near the coastal town of Zadar. Then, in mid-November, the second attempt had foundered on a snow-covered mountain pass thirty miles south of Sarajevo. Their vehicle, outfitted with summer tires and pulling a trailer overloaded with nearly a ton of medical supplies, skidded out of control on the pass. Brandauer, who was at the wheel, tortured the gearbox and gunned the engine until the transmission went and the radiator cap blew. The two men spent the night in the stranded vehicle—Wihan in a down ski parka, and Brandauer in specially insulated winter gear he had used in Alaska during the filming of "White Fang," three years earlier. At daybreak, they poured Coca-Cola and fruit drink into the radiator as a coolant, and in first gear (the only surviving gear) they managed to turn the vehicle around. They rolled down the mountain in neutral as far as the monastery at Posušje, where the Franciscan monks took the men into their care, made repairs on the vehicle, and saw to the safekeeping of the morphine. Now, on their third attempt, having travelled eighteen hours and nearly five hundred miles, Wihan and Brandauer, along with Walleczek, were at last within a few miles of Sarajevo.

At first, Sarajevo had borne the deprivations and dangers of the war with a distinctive Central European grace—the waiters who continued to serve guests in tuxedos, the cellist who defied the gunfire to perform in an open square. But by Christmas, after six months of continuous siege, the city had grown desperate. Water and electricity, available only intermittently since the summer, had been cut off completely for the last fourteen days. Serbian harassment of supply convoys, coupled with the United Nations' concern for the safety of its transport planes, had led to a three-week suspension of relief-supply deliveries. In Sarajevo, the food situation had reached its most critical point of the war. Amid almost incessant fire from tanks, artillery, and mortars—more than four hundred explosions were registered on the day before Christmas—came the first reports of death by starvation.

Earlier that week, the United Nations had resumed its efforts to get supplies into Sarajevo. In the two days before Christmas, its representatives had delivered what was estimated to be eight hundred tons of food—enough to sustain the inhabitants for three days.

THE instant the rocket struck, Walleczek switched off the lights, but he continued driving, hoping to outdistance the gunfire. After a short while, he stopped the vehicle. Stunned by the attack, the three men sat in silence, Brandauer with the cigarette still pressed between his lips. Suddenly, two Bosnian soldiers appeared beside the Jeep and began gesturing frantically and pointing to Brandauer's cigarette. He immediately extinguished it.

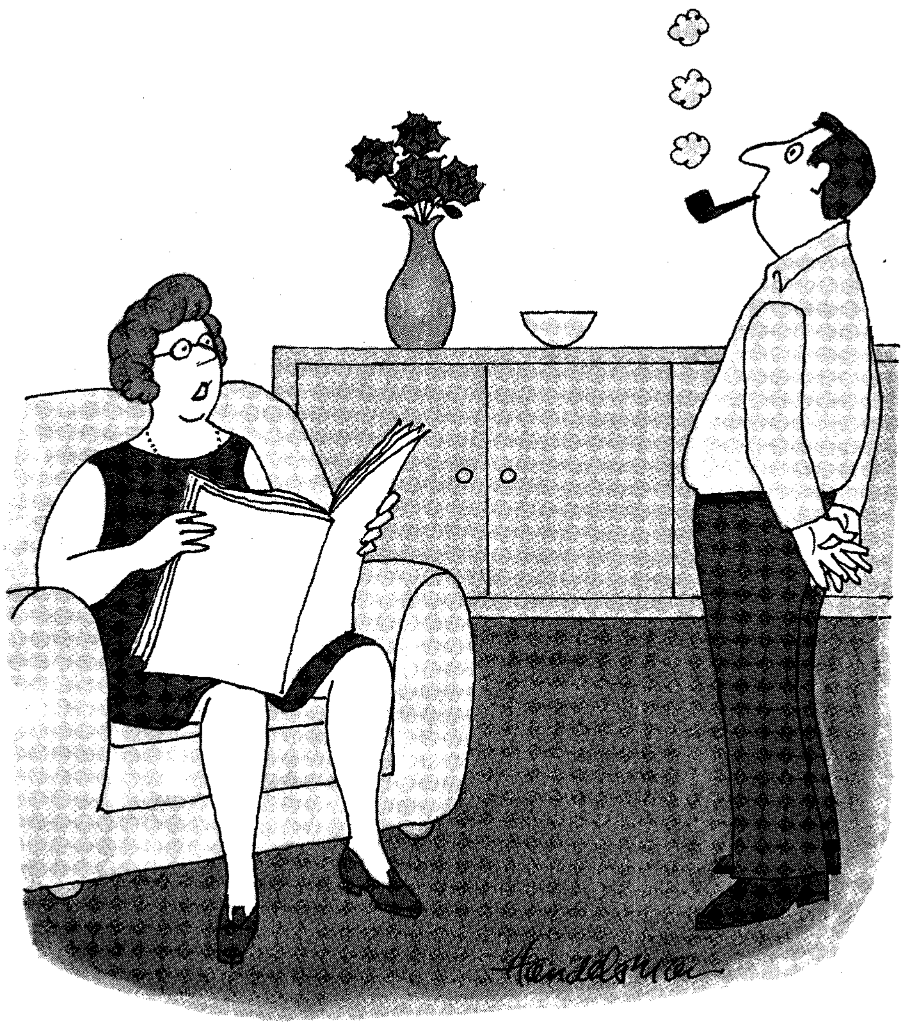
As Walleczek opened the door to speak with the soldiers, the interior lights flashed on. "The vehicle lit up like a pumpkin," Walleczek says. One soldier kicked the door shut and ducked. Fearing that the flash of light would again attract Serbian gunfire, Walleczek, Wihan, and Brandauer rolled down the windows, scrambled out of the vehicle, and dashed into the woods.

The Bosnian soldiers led the three Austrians to a nearby bunker—an underground shelter reinforced with roughhewn logs and furnished with three bus seats, a simple table, and a small wooden bunk. Knapsacks, helmets, and rifles hung from the walls. Three Muslim soldiers, one of whom appeared to be in his late sixties, occupied the bunker, and they welcomed their guests warmly and extended Christmas greetings.

Although the soldiers advised the three against proceeding further, Wihan urged that they continue to Sarajevo: the morphine was desperately needed at the hospital, he wanted to be certain the delivery made it into the hands of the physicians themselves, and, with Sarajevo less than two miles away, he felt they had come too close to their destination to turn back now. But Walleczek, sobered by the attack, deemed it foolhardy to continue. Brandauer, too, had grown apprehensive.

"Klaus has been in a number of war films, and they have all had some connection to Sarajevo," Wihan later told me. "He is very superstitious when it comes to that city."

Indeed, the moment must have seemed particularly portentous for



"Well, if you were Gergen what would you tell McLarty to tell Clinton to tell Christopher to do?"

Brandauer. In the early and middle eighties, when he was visible in such mainstream Hollywood hits as the James Bond film "Never Say Never Again" and "Out of Africa," he also made three films with the Hungarian director István Szabó, all of which dealt with the human and historical tragedies of Central Europe: "Mephisto," which won the 1981 Academy Award for best foreign film; "Colonel Redl"; and "Hanussen." Sarajevo was at the historical, if not the geographical, core of the second and third films. In "Hanussen," Brandauer plays a young soldier fighting in the Balkans during the First World War. Awed by the bloodshed in "these war-ravaged lands," he reflects on the suffering of the women and children, and says in despair, "I look into their faces and a single question screams out at me: What is to become of us?" As the film ends, we see Hanussen's bullet-riddled body lying in a forest.

The three men spent several restless hours in the bunker, trying to sleep, listening to the distant impact of artillery fire, and watching sand trickle from support beams with each nearby detonation. Around four o'clock in the morning, they returned to the Jeep and, with the lights off and Walleczek once again at the wheel, they inched their way back toward the main road. Two hours later, they arrived in Jablanica, handed the supplies over to Red Cross officials, and then began the return journey to Austria.

SINCE last July, when Helmut Wihan, unable simply to sit and watch the mounting horrors in Bosnia, packed his VW van with plasma, baby formula, and medical supplies and drove to Sarajevo—a sixteen-hour journey during which he came so close to the fighting that the sliding door to his van was blown open by the concussion of tank fire—he has been to the war zone more than a dozen times and has delivered food, clothing, medication, and hospital equipment worth, he estimates, two million dollars. In addition, he has transported bed frames, old bicycles, crates of oranges, pallets of potatoes, cases of chocolate bars, respirator tubes, a wheelchair, children's toys—virtually anything he can fit into his van.

The trips themselves can occur spontaneously. "Last summer, when I was coming to visit, he was supposed to pick me up at the Munich airport," says Sandra Wihan, his twenty-two-year-old daughter, from his first marriage—Wihan has been married and divorced twice—who until last summer lived with her mother in Washington, D.C., but has since returned to Austria, where she works as a lab assistant in her father's medical practice. "We spoke the day before my flight left. He told me he might have to go to Sarajevo and that I should wait a half hour at the airport, and, if he didn't show up, I should take a cab to Salzburg." Wihan never appeared. "I was alone for three days in the house, and had no idea where he had gone or what had happened to him. My father is like that." Wihan's approach has been impulsive, idiosyncratic, and at times chaotic, but, most important, it has been effective.

Skirting the complications of the large assistance organizations, Wihan delivers his cargoes directly to the people in need. In crossing the numerous borders and checkpoints between Salzburg and Sarajevo—those manned by Austrian border officials, Slovenian border officials, and Croatian border officials; United Nations units; Croatian, Bosnian, and Serbian military forces; and Muslim, Croatian, or Serb bandits—he uses whatever means are necessary to get him through, including his Austrian passport, his medical identification, and diverse papers issued by international relief organizations. Often Wihan barters passage with packets of cigarettes, and on other occasions with hundred-dollar bills. Beneath the seat of his van, he keeps a "08" (pronounced *null acht*), a German-made sidearm dating from the Second

World War. The breach is stamped "1939." On the side of the barrel is a German eagle bearing the Nazi swastika.

In the course of the past year, Wihan has persuaded a wide range of Austrian businesses and companies—he counts at least a hundred and thirty—to supply him with food, medicine, and equipment. He has also pressed an array of friends and associates into joining him on his excursions into the war zone: a German psychologist, an Austrian university instructor, a Swedish businessman, an art historian, and, of course, Klaus Maria Brandauer.

"Klaus came with me for the first time last autumn, shortly after the death of his wife, Karin," Wihan told me recently. According to Wihan, Karin, whom Brandauer married in 1963, when they were both in their teens, was suffering from breast cancer and had been coming to see Wihan on a regular basis, generally in the company of her husband, for about a year. "We often talked about my trips down to Sarajevo," Wihan said. "Both she and Klaus were very distressed by the horrors that were taking place in Bosnia. Before she died, she said she thought this was something that Klaus should do."

Last November, Brandauer called Wihan and expressed interest in helping to bring a load of medication to Sarajevo. Brandauer has since accompanied Wihan on four excursions into Croatia and Bosnia. Brandauer himself refuses to discuss his efforts in the war zone. Wolfgang Prinz, his agent in Vienna, dismisses inquiries from the media with a simple rebuff: Brandauer would rather spend his time helping people than talking about it. But Wihan suggests that there are other reasons for Brandauer's silence. "Karin's death has hit Klaus very hard," Wihan says. "I think these trips to Bosnia have helped him deal with his own tragedy. They are very personal to him."

THIS March, when I first visited Wihan at his home, a rustic farmhouse in St. Jakob am Thurn, a village twelve miles south of Salzburg, Wihan, an athletically built man in his early fifties with intense eyes, a prominent nose, and a partly bald head, was living with Sandra and five Bosnian refugees he had smuggled into Austria the previous autumn—a mother, her two-year-old and thirteen-year-old sons, her nine-year-old daughter, and her eighteen-year-old sister. (The rest of the family is still situated in and around Sarajevo.) Although they are technically illegal aliens, Wihan has secured temporary-resident status for them and has since helped them relocate to their own apartment.

When I arrived at Wihan's home, he had Turkish coffee set out, and the entire Bosnian family was assembled at the table. He then insisted that Aida, the sister, relate her story. Aida is an attractive young woman with shoulder-length hair and warm brown eyes. In halting German, she spoke of an everyday life—days in school, nights in front of the television, weekends at the discothèque—that was interrupted by a war as cruel as it was unexpected. Until the spring of 1992, she lived with her mother (her father died when she was nine) and two sisters in the family home, in a suburb of Rogatica, a predominantly Muslim town thirty miles east of Sarajevo. That June, following a massive bombardment of Rogatica by Serb forces, Aida and her family fled the region with a column of two thousand other Muslims, wandering for several days through woods, plagued by exhaustion, hunger, and repeated Serb mortar fire.

Aida's party found temporary safety in Goražde, in eastern Bosnia, and passed the next four months in a small weekend hut with twenty other refugees. (Goražde, designated a "safe haven" by the United Nations, is currently besieged by Serb forces.) Aida says her family survived by eating apples from nearby orchards. "Oh, apples!" Aida rubs her stomach and laughs. "So many apples."

Until this moment, Wihan has sat quietly, listening to Aida's story. Now he insists that Aida talk about the United Nations relief efforts in Goražde. Aida explains that in the four months she spent there a United Nations supply convoy came to the town only once, and that the provisions, which were entrusted to local authorities, were distributed selectively—primarily to permanent residents of Goražde. During those months in Goražde, she says, she received from United Nations relief workers a hundred grams of rice, a spoonful of butter, and a hundred grams of oil.

"A hundred grams of rice!" Wihan exclaims. "Do you know how much a hundred grams of rice is?" He turns to Aida and says, "Show him! Show him how much a hundred grams of rice is."

Aida looks puzzled and says, "I don't know. Not very much." Then she glances at the table and takes a small coffee cup in her hand. "Maybe this much."

"A single coffee cup filled with rice in four months!" Wihan says passionately. "A single coffee cup filled with rice. Everyone talks about United Nations assistance, and all the refugees ever saw was a coffee cup of rice." Wihan falls silent and stares at Aida darkly.

HELMUT WIHAN'S frustration with organized relief agencies is understandable. Stories of corruption and misappropriation in the region abound. At almost every point in the process, it seems, inefficient bureaucracies, corrupt officials, and local military units take their cut.

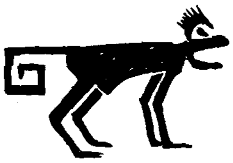
According to one source within the Croation government, at times as much as fifty per cent of the aid collected by large international relief organizations has disappeared in administrative costs. Serb forces regularly levy a thirty-per-cent "toll" on relief convoys passing through checkpoints. And the aid that does make it into areas of greatest need often ends up on the black market or in the hands of corrupt or partisan local officials.

Last December, a United Nations official, speaking on condition of anonymity, conceded that half the food delivered to Sarajevo under United Nations auspices was being "misappropriated," and Peter Kessler, a spokesman for the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees in Zagreb, also admitted at that time to the inadequacy of relief aid for Sarajevo.

"The United Nations is not completely at fault," Wihan says. "Its people are doing what they can, but they are restricted by their own bureaucracy, and by the political situation, in a way that an individual is not." Further, Wihan insists that people cannot rely on organizations to fulfill what he sees to be individual moral obligations. "What you must not forget is that every action, no matter how insignificant it seems, can save a human life," he says. "In Split, a physician told me that a single chocolate bar can prolong a child's life by eleven days. Do you know what that means? To save a human life with a chocolate bar?"

Wihan's effort to deliver assistance where needed has attracted notice, and his effectiveness is what led to his being entrusted with the delivery of the morphine last autumn. Wihan will not reveal the exact amount, or the source, but suggests that the street value is in the millions of dollars. "My sources were afraid that if they sent this through normal channels it would disappear," he says. "They wanted to get it to the people who were in need."

When I visited Wihan in March, he was preparing to take another load of morphine to Bosnia. "This is the last of it," he said, pointing to several large cartons piled in a corner of his living room. He tore open a box and handed me a small packet—half the thickness of a pack of cigarettes—containing five glass ampules filled with clear liquid. The packet also contained a small steel blade, to be used to score the neck of an ampule before breaking it off to insert the needle.



Wihan says that morphine, an opium derivative, is the most effective anesthetic under wartime conditions, because doctors can operate while a patient is still conscious, and that it is especially effective during the amputation of limbs. "Amputation is the treatment of last resort," he explains. "You do this when there is no time, no resources for saving a limb. The hospitals are so overburdened that amputation has become the only way to deal with the vast number of cases. Unfortunately, each of these cases is a medical decision that will affect the individual for the rest of his life." In addition to maiming large numbers of soldiers, sniper and mortar fire has also claimed tens of thousands of civilian casualties. "The proportions are truly horrifying," Wihan says. "I don't think you have seen so much limb cutting since the First World War."

Others agree. One Bosnian Embassy official in Vienna says that there are thousands of new amputees in Sarajevo alone. In a home for refugees outside Zagreb which I visited in late March, the scars of war were very much in evidence. There were three infants, less than a month old, the offspring of last summer's rapes, who had been abandoned by their mothers. A woman held a child of perhaps nine months, rocking him in her arms, letting his single leg swing back and forth. Another child, perhaps two years old, smiled as he pulled himself across the room with his arms, the empty legs of his red sleepers dragging behind him on the floor.

In the last two years, as the Balkan horrors have accumulated, and the international community has remained a hapless onlooker at this gruesome tragedy, a small army of private citizens—the number of individuals is incalculable, but estimates range into the thousands—has been delivering food, medicine, and clothing to the war-ravaged region.

They come from Denmark, Britain, Germany, France, Sweden, the Netherlands, Switzerland, Luxembourg—some in convoys of trucks loaded with supplies, others driving only an automobile filled with food or clothing. They come almost exclusively in "soft vehicles"—the term for cars, vans, and trucks without shielding or armor plate—bringing their desperately needed supplies to warehouses, to refugee centers, to towns and villages in remote regions. These individuals are part of a great humanitarian effort that, despite hindrances ranging from tank fire to bureaucratic incompetence and corruption, has kept millions of people from starving to death. "Last November, experts were predicting that as many as half a million men, women, and children would die from starvation and exposure during the winter months," a United Nations official in Zagreb told me in March. "We did not have the resources to prevent this catastrophe. Every bit of assistance, no matter how large or small, has made a difference. Thanks to the efforts of thousands of individuals, it is a tragedy that did not happen."

Despite their good intentions, the individuals involved in these private relief efforts have not always received a warm welcome. At many border crossings and checkpoints, they have been subjected to rigorous inspections. Entire cargoes have been confiscated. Along isolated routes, drivers have fallen prey to renegade bands of Serbs, Muslims, and Croats. They have been harassed and occasionally ambushed, and, in recent months, with ever greater frequency, they are being killed. "There are hundreds of thousands of people out there with guns," Peter Kessler says. "The situation has degenerated so far that even aid workers are being attacked."

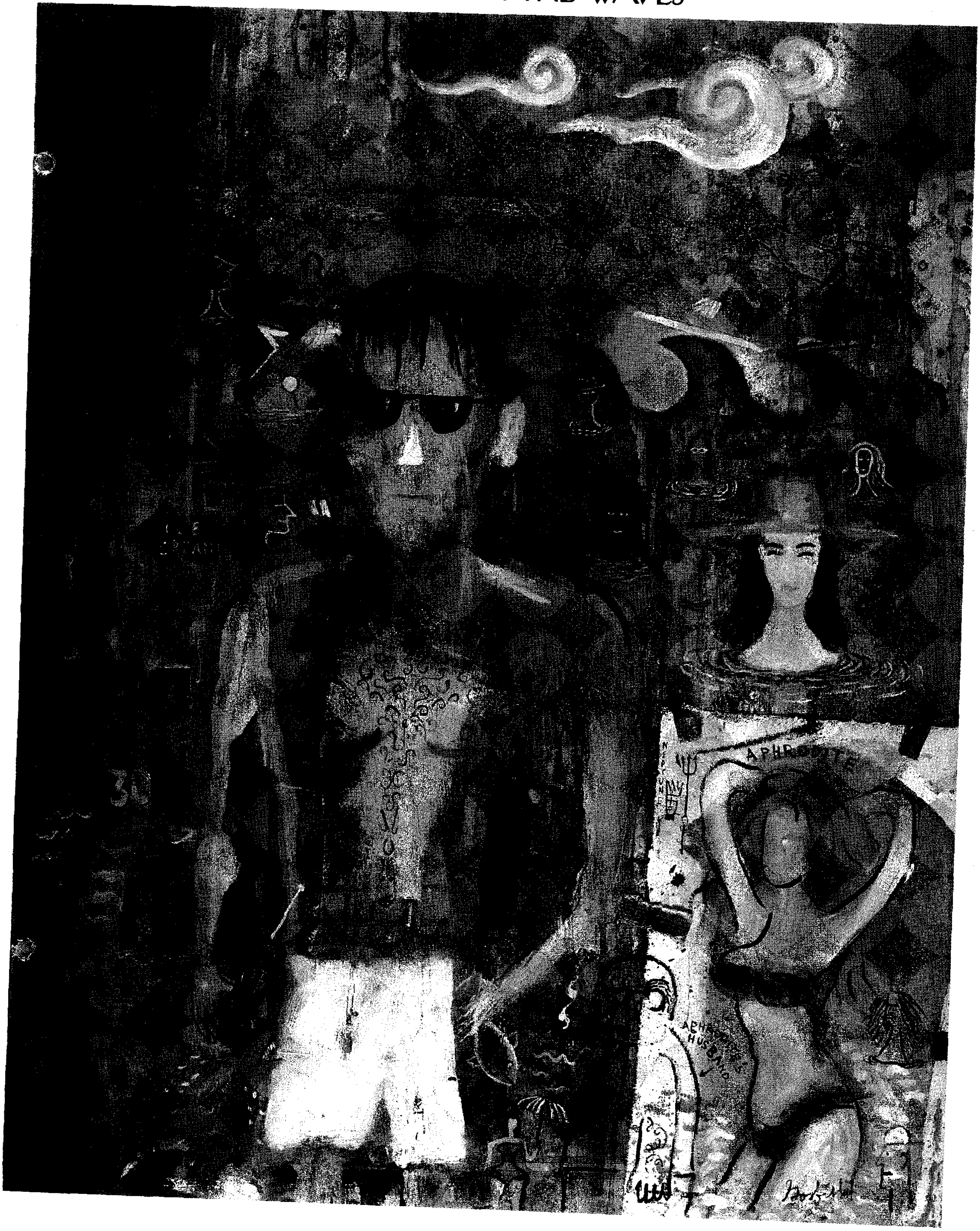
Kessler observes that since the war began there have been more than four hundred casualties among United Nations personnel, including thirty-eight fatalities. Some forty journalists have been killed. Since the spring, at least a dozen relief workers have died while delivering aid in Bosnia. Private aid remains vital, Kessler says, noting that despite a recent infusion of sixty-three and a half million dollars from numerous governments—enough to sustain the relief effort for the next three months, according to Kessler—the United Nations' resources cannot meet all the humanitarian needs in the region.

Helmut Wihan maintains that even if the United Nations could provide adequate levels of aid the need for individual initiatives would remain. To illustrate his point, he takes a sheet of paper and draws a cluster of seven large circles, then fills the interstices between the circles with smaller and smaller circles, and fills the spaces between the smallest circles with single dots. "The larger the organizations, the larger the gaps between them," Wihan explains. "You fill these spaces with smaller organizations, but, no matter how many of these there are, there will always be gaps. That is where the individual is needed." Wihan drops the tip of his pen into one of the spaces and adds another point. "This is where I work."

Helmut Wihan has always worked there, in the gaps and chinks of the bureaucracy and the established or-

ARTIST'S NOTEBOOK BY JOSH GOSFIELD

RISING FROM THE WAVES


NEPTUNE
APHRODITE
APHRODITE'S HUSBAND
30

der. He graduated from medical school in 1970, undertook further medical study in Vienna and Stockholm, then returned to Salzburg to join his father's flourishing medical practice, specializing in lung diseases. Over the years, he has emerged as an enfant terrible in Austria's medical community.

In the early nineteen-eighties, Wihan noticed an increasing incidence of lung disease, and especially cancer, among young people in Salzburg. By charting the geographical distribution of the illnesses, he determined that lung diseases were highest along several main traffic arteries in the city. In the autumn of 1983, having treated six hundred patients with lung cancer, Wihan went public with his findings. The revelations caused a minor sensation in Austria and in neighboring Germany when the popular German weekly *Bunte Illustrierte* published an article on Wihan entitled "The Cancer Rebel of Salzburg."

Wihan has occupied a prominent place in Salzburg's public life ever since, fighting airport expansions, attempting to close power plants, warning local communities of toxic emissions, challenging official studies that played down the environmental dangers of pollution. The Austrian medical establishment, including the medical associations of both Salzburg and Vienna, has repeatedly rebuked Helmut Wihan for breaching the traditional etiquette of his profession, by taking his issues public instead of advancing them first within the medical community. "I am not interested in following procedure," Wihan says. "I am interested in saving lives."

From the time Wihan began delivering supplies to Bosnia, a year ago, his disregard for established order and his willingness to take risks—a willingness that some say is matched only by his uncanny instinct for detecting danger—have both frustrated and frightened many of those accompanying him.

Alenka Kemptner, a Slovenian resident of Salzburg who has been organizing aid for refugee camps in Slovenia since the summer of 1991, and who initiated Wihan into relief work in the region, complains that he is well intentioned but erratic. "Helmut has this incredible need to do good, but also to take risks," she says.

Christer Söderberg, a Swedish businessman who recently established a Salzburg-based nonprofit company called Trade for Aid, which has helped to deliver more than a hundred tons of aid to the war zone, agrees with Kemptner. "Trade for Aid is interested in long-term aid and long-term investment in the region," Söderberg, who has coöperated with Wihan on several ventures, says. "Helmut is extremely effective in what he does, but he is just too impulsive, too unpredictable. You can't run a business like that, and, besides, I refuse to risk getting myself killed." Speaking with a mixture of frustration and affection, Söderberg refers to Wihan as Dr. Chaos.

Karolin Wendt is a German physician and psychologist who until the recent outbreak of fighting in western Bosnia was working to establish a counselling center for rape victims and traumatized children in Zenica, a predominantly Muslim town fifty miles northwest of Sarajevo. In April, she brought Wihan along to help deliver medical supplies to the city. According to Wendt, since the spring Zenica's population of eighty-five thousand has swollen by more than thirty thousand refugees, mainly women and children. (Last week, non-Muslim residents were expelled, and hundreds were killed. "After today, it's a Muslim city," Wendt said last Monday.)

On a Sunday evening in April, Wihan and Wendt left Salzburg in Wihan's van, which they had packed with medications, foodstuffs, and other supplies. They drove into the early hours of Monday morning, heading south past Villach, Ljubljana, and Rijeka, reaching Zadar toward daybreak. They continued along the coastal road toward Split, and there they left the main road and drove inland along unpaved mountain roads toward the town of Duvno, which they reached around noon. Along the way, they were repeatedly warned by Muslims about Croatian attacks. It took them four hours to cover the next twenty-five miles to the town of Prozor. In the next town, Gornji Vakuf, which is predominantly Muslim, the tension was palpable. Groups of loitering civilians stared suspiciously as Wihan's van passed through the empty streets.

When they reached Vitez, a small town with a mixed population of Croats and Muslims, they were halted by Croatian soldiers who at first refused to

AMONG THE MISSING

Know me? I am the ghost of Gansevoort Pier.
Out of the Trucks, beside the garbage scow
where rotten pilings form a sort of prow,
I loom, your practiced shadow, waiting here

for celebrants who cease to come my way,
though mine were limbs as versatile as theirs
and eyes as vagrant. Odd that no one cares
to ogle me now where I, as ever, lay

myself out, all my assets and then some,
weather permitting. Is my voice so faint?
Can't you hear me over the river's complaint?
Too dark to see me? Have you all become

ghosts? What earthly good is that? I want
incarnate lovers hungry for my parts,
longing hands and long-since lonely hearts!
It is your living bodies I must haunt,

and while the Hudson lugs its burdens past,
having no hosts to welcome or repel
disclosures of the kind I do so well,
I with the other ghosts am laid at last.

—Richard Howard

let them continue. "They kept saying, 'The Muslims are over there. They will shoot you,' " Wendt recalls. "They said that the night before Muslims had raped and murdered seven Croatian teen-agers on their way back from a disco. The bodies were found with their throats slit in a drainage ditch. 'The Muslims will shoot you,' they kept saying. 'The Muslims are killing anyone on the roads.' "

Sensing the seriousness of the situation, Wendt suggested that she and Wihan drive to the United Nations Protection Force base in Vitez and secure an escort to Zenica. But Wihan rejected the idea out of hand. "He insisted that we drive the stretch ourselves," Wendt recalls. " 'We are doctors!' he shouted. 'We are doctors! We will drive there ourselves!' "

The Croatian guards eventually let them pass, and around nine o'clock that evening, after twenty-three hours on the road, Wihan and Wendt arrived in Zenica. The next day, they delivered the supplies, visited the hospital and several local offices, and by ten o'clock were on their way back to Austria. They arrived in Salzburg at eight o'clock the following morning.

That evening, when Wendt turned on her television set, she learned that the tense calm in Vitez had ruptured, when men in Croatian uniforms doused a Muslim house with gasoline and set it on fire, incinerating an entire family. The Croatian press later asserted that the perpetrators were Serbs in Croatian uniforms. The attack has contributed to a spiral of violence that has since escalated into vicious bloodshed between Muslims and Croats.

Wendt, who has not been back to Zenica since, says that she will not expose herself to danger the way Helmut Wihan does. "Helmut always has this need to prove himself, to test the limits, to put himself in extreme, life-threatening situations," she says. "He keeps saying that he does this because he cannot stand idle and see injustice, but with Helmut there is more to it than that. It is a way for him to come to terms with his own troubled past. The problem with Helmut is that he is *nazistisch belastet*"—burdened by National Socialism.

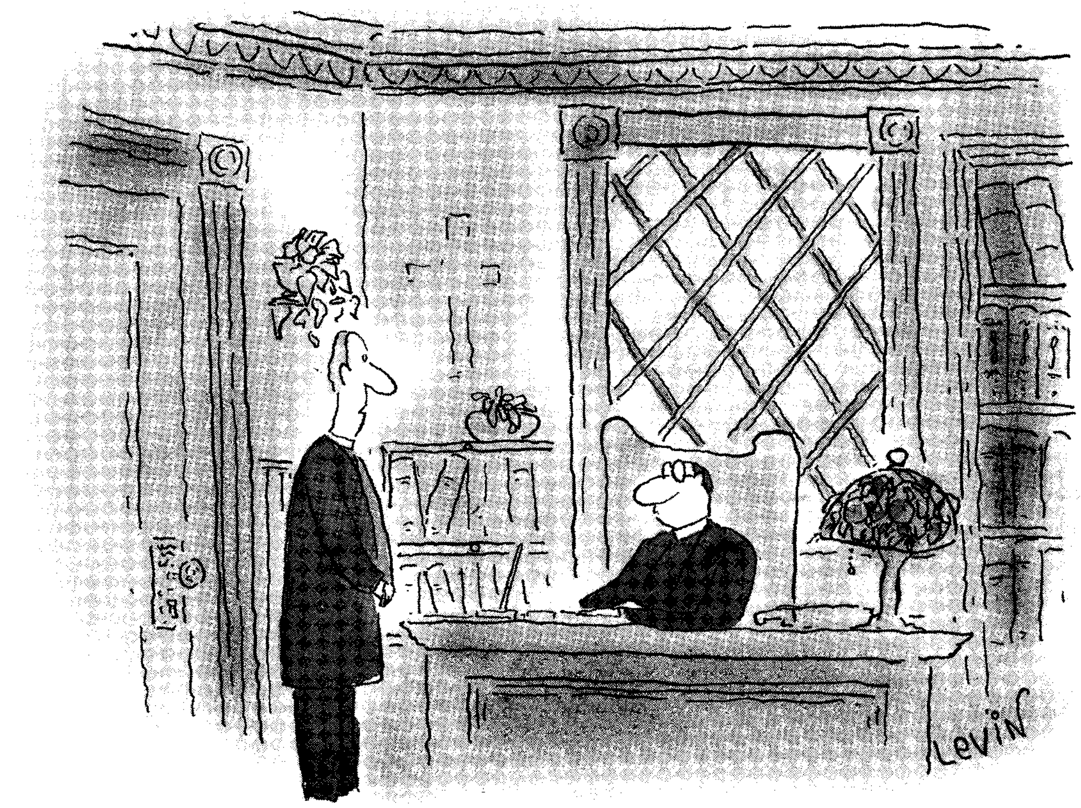
It is a charge that Wihan does not deny. "I was born into the perfect Aryan family," he says. "My father was a devoted Nazi and a member of the Waffen S.S." The Waffen S.S. was the military arm of the Schutzstaffel, the élite cadre of National Socialists, whose black-uniformed members represented the most fanatical adherents of the Nazi ideology and are held accountable for some of the worst atrocities committed by Germans during the Second World War. "My father was a true believer, who knew many of the high-ranking Nazis in Austria. He used to talk about a walk he once took with Adolf Eichmann."

Although Helmut Wihan remembers few details of his father's life in the S.S.—the second of four children, he was born in 1940, while his father, Franz, was serving in the town of Znaim, on the Austrian-Czech border—he does recall that the family led a comfortable and privileged existence during the war. "My father was always impeccably dressed and groomed," he says. "I remember that he had a servant and a horse and a large sword that was curved like a sabre and hung from a wide black belt around his waist. He seemed like something out of a storybook, like a king or the Kaiser."

According to Wihan, his father practiced medicine at a military hospital in Znaim, tending the wounded of the German Wehrmacht. Toward the end of the war, the Wihan family moved to Vienna and from there fled west by car as the Russian forces closed in. Franz Wihan was eventually captured by the Americans and was incarcerated for two years, with sixteen thousand other Nazis, in a large compound in Glasenbach, near Salzburg. He was released in 1947.

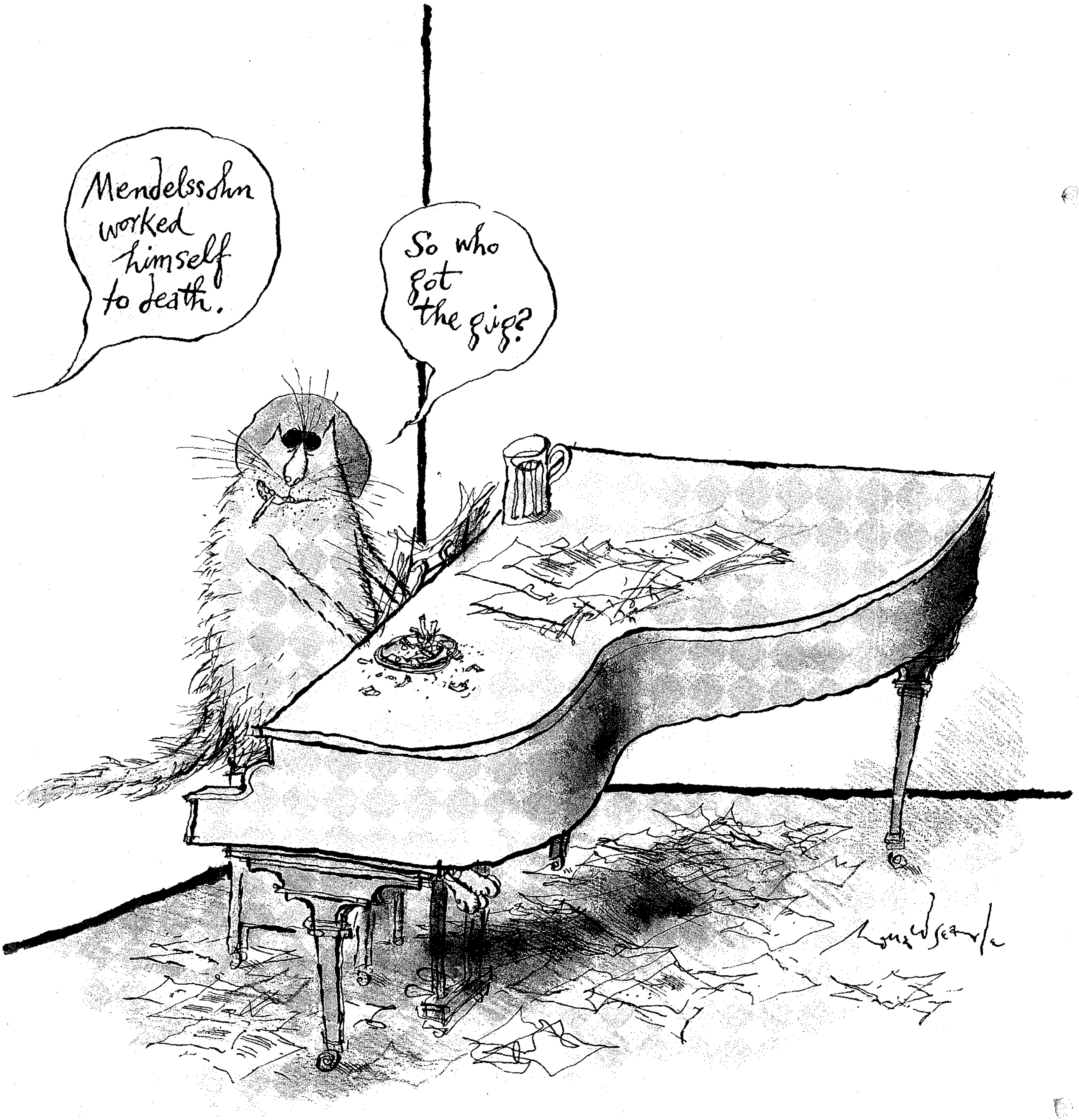
Wihan recalls that he first became aware of his father's Nazi past during the mid-fifties, by which time Franz Wihan had established himself as a respected Salzburg physician. "My father had never talked about the war years," he says, "but it began to occur to me that there was a whole circle of former Nazis that used to associate with him. It was a very tight group."

In the mid-sixties, Wihan confronted his father with his past, and found him



"Lately, we've been getting a number of white males in their thirties seeking sanctuary."

GREAT MOMENTS IN MUSIC


Mendelssohn worked himself to death.
So who got the gig?

totally unrepentant. "To this day, my father believes that the Holocaust never took place," Wihan told me. "He used to say that the scenes from the concentration camps were propaganda films shot in Florida by the C.I.A. He could not accept that his ideology could have produced such horrors. That is because he himself was so clean." Wihan used the word *lupenrein*—clean enough to be inspected through a magnifying glass.

According to Michael Kater, a professor of history at York University, in Toronto, who has written an authoritative study of German physicians in the Third Reich, "Doctors Under Hitler," and has served as a consultant in cases against former Nazi doctors in the United States, the Waffen S.S. physician Franz Wihan may not have been as innocent as his son would like to believe. Kater recently reviewed copies of Franz Wihan's Nazi Party registration card and his medical file, which suggest a "model career" for an S.S. physician. By 1942, Wihan had become not only the chief physician of a military hospital but also the head of the Amt für Volksgesundheit—the Office of People's Health—for the district of Znaim.

"As head of the Office of People's Health in Znaim in 1941, Wihan was in a position to make all kinds of judgments," Kater says. "This was the period of what we call 'wild euthanasia,' when the Nazis were attempting to cleanse the German *Volk* of diseases they believed to be hereditary." Persons suffering from these *Erbkrankheiten*—epilepsy, mental illness, blindness, deafness, other physical handicaps, alcoholism, feeblemindedness—were dispatched to "clinics," where they were either sterilized or exterminated.

"While he was in Znaim, it would have been Wihan's job to review the individual cases and decide who would go to the clinics," Kater observes. "I am not saying that he actually performed euthanasia, but he was certainly in a position to decide between life and death."

In fairness to Franz Wihan, it should be noted that he was never charged with any war crimes. Helmut Wihan insists on his father's innocence, and maintains that his father used his position to help save the lives of hundreds of people. He claims that his father's very sense of humanity blinded him to the atrocities committed in the name of National Socialism. "He could not imagine that others were capable of such crimes, only because he himself could never have done such things," Wihan says. "My father was naïve, unbelievably naïve. Let me tell you, the naïve ones are always the most dangerous, because they don't see things for what they are."

Last week, just days after Serb forces launched the most intense barrage of the war, pummelling Sarajevo and the surrounding region with nearly four thousand rounds of artillery, rocket, and mortar fire on a single day—Peter Kessler, who was in Sarajevo at the time of the attack, spoke of a "constant thunder" of detonations—I visited Helmut Wihan in St. Jakob. He had just returned from a three-day trip to Zadar, where he had distributed two vanloads of medication, baby formula, yogurt, clothing, and toys. He was visibly distressed by what he had seen. "Last spring, people still had hope that something would happen, that America or the Europeans would do something to help them," he said. "But now they know there is no hope. They know the world has abandoned them. You look in the faces of the children and you see that they are finished, that they are spiritually ruined."

Another consequence of the prolonged fighting, Wihan says, is that the donors, too, have begun to weary. "When I first began collecting things last summer, people were giving me entire pallets of food and medication," Wihan told me. "We were taking down truckloads of supplies—eighteen- or twenty-foot trucks filled with the best-quality goods. Now I am happy if I can fill my van. People are tired of giving." Wihan is encountering a phenomenon known in the aid business as "donor fatigue," one of whose side effects is, in the case of Bosnia, "compassion fatigue"—people have become numbed by the spectacle of Croats, Serbs, and Muslims slaughtering one another.

Wihan admitted to being exhausted by the long drive to Zadar and back, by the haggling with border guards, by the endless runaround with the bureaucracy—it had taken him a full day of paper-chasing before officials allowed him to deliver medication to the local hospital—and by the sight of the gaunt-eyed children and the motherless babies. "The war has already gone on too long," he said. "It has really gone on too long."

As Wihan spoke, I recalled the previous time I had sat with him in his living room. It had been in mid-April, just after President Clinton stepped back from the brink of military intervention in Bosnia. Wihan had been lying on the sofa in a state of depression, talking about the oppressive weather conditions (it was unusually warm for April), about the hopes that had been raised by the prospect of American intervention, about the stunning collapse of Clinton's resolve.

Wihan had spoken at some length about returning to Bosnia with Brandauer, who had expressed interest in future ventures in the region, but he said that Brandauer was occupied with a new film project—an adaptation of "Mario and the Magician," Thomas Mann's 1930 novella about the social and psychological roots of European Fascism, which he is directing and starring in. Wihan had spoken of his own need to care for his patients, to run his practice, to earn a living. And he had spoken about human suffering, human compassion, human responsibility, and finally about his father, the Jews, and the Holocaust.

"For a half century, we have been asking ourselves how the world could have let something like the Holocaust take place," he said in a thoughtful voice. "Men, women, and children rounded up and sent to gas chambers. Millions and millions of human lives destroyed. We have told ourselves that such a thing could never happen again, that we would never let it happen again. We said we didn't know such atrocities could ever occur, we didn't know man was capable of such horrific deeds. We hid from the truth, behind the lie that we knew nothing about the death camps. But it won't be so easy this time."

Wihan claimed that the mass media—the television footage of Dubrovnik, Sarajevo, and Srebrenica, the newspaper stories and photographs of raped women, of detention camps, of mass graves, of maimed children—not only have made it impossible to deny the horrors of the war but have also implicated us in the crimes. As witnesses to this "Balkan Holocaust," Wihan maintains, every one of us is to some degree accountable for the tragedy, just as the average German after the Second World War was held accountable—and, according to Wihan, should have been held accountable—for the crimes of National Socialism. To bear witness and to do nothing, according to Wihan, is to abet. "There will come a time when we will have to account for what has happened in Bosnia," he said. "There will come a time when we will be judged, when our children will read these headlines and see these photographs, and will ask every one of us, 'Why didn't you try to stop the rape and murder? Why didn't you do something to help?' "

Helmut Wihan, for one, will not have to answer this question. ♦

Just when you think the Kings might be tempted to tank this charade and get out of Dodge with as many pingpong balls as they can, along comes Saturday.

Along comes Dallas, the second stop on this weekend's Texas two-step, and along comes the Mavericks, sprinting neck-and-neck with infamy.

Along comes a reason to play.—*Sacramento Bee.*

Along comes a reason to go back to baseball.

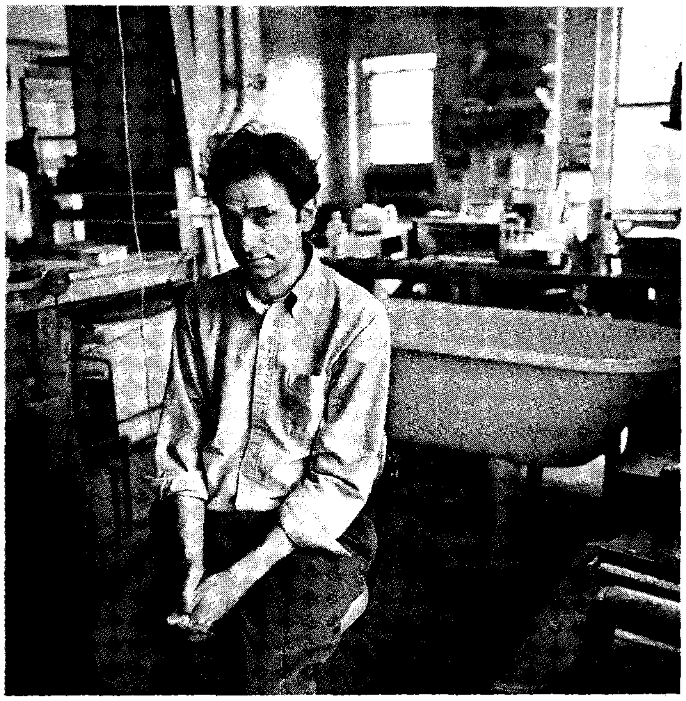
PROFILE

A WANDERER IN THE PERFECT CITY

All week long, the real-estate photographer Julius Knipl makes his way through the streets of the city as if in a dream, lost in memories of the forgotten people of a forgotten New York. But, fortunately for Knipl, he is not completely alone in his reverie—he always travels under the watchful eye of Ben Katchor.

BY LAWRENCE WESCHLER

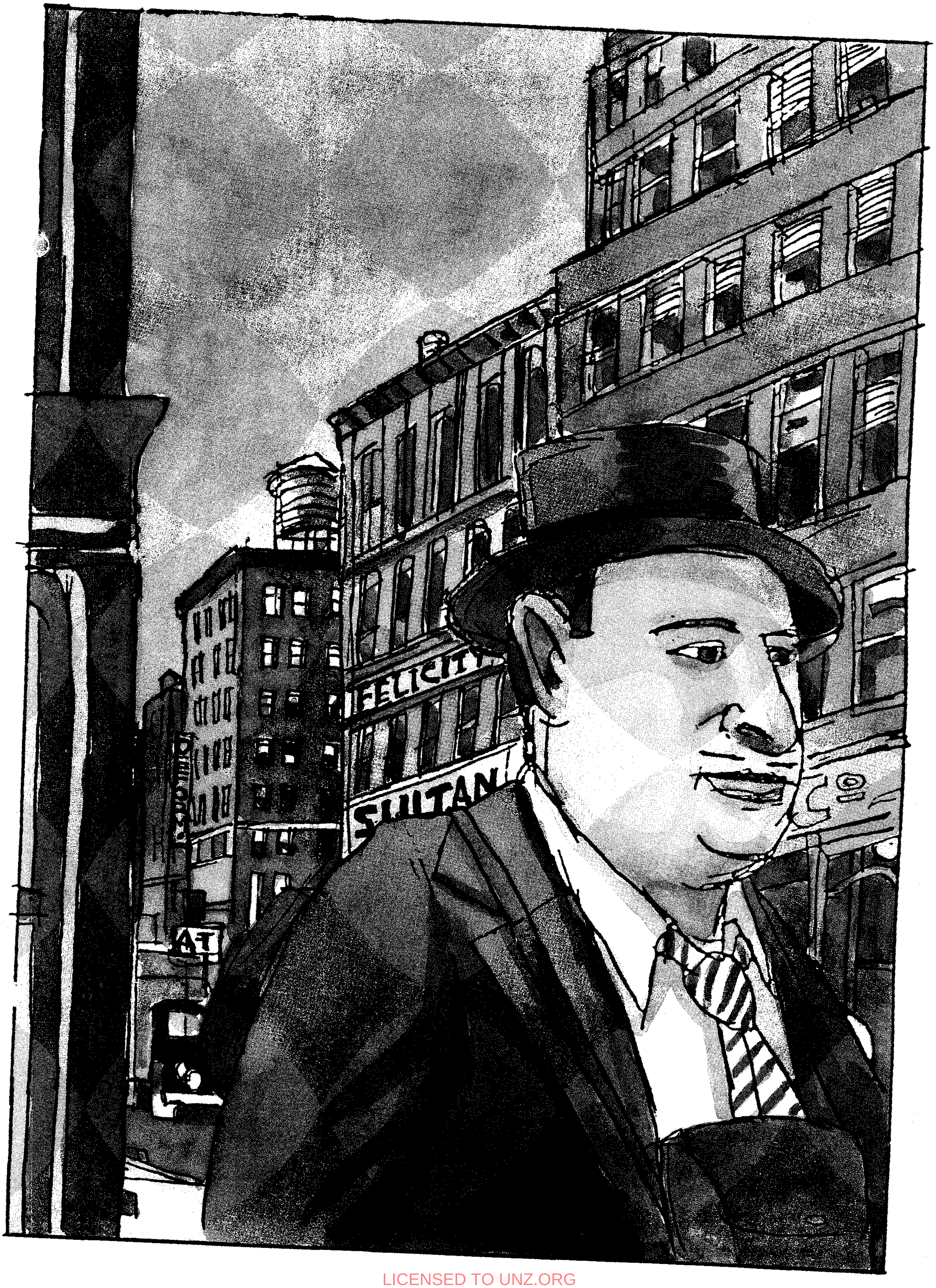
How old is Julius Knipl, anyway? These days, as he scratches out his decidedly marginal subsistence as a real-estate photographer (his life's third vocation, following stints as a pony-cart concessionaire and, before that, a long time ago, a dance-school instructor), his mind seems perennially adrift in the forties, or maybe even the thirties, his heart's true home. He's kind of ageless. Let's be generous and say he's well into his late middle years. Short, stout, his squarish face distinguished by a pencil-thin mustache, his thinning hair almost invariably covered by the same vaguely rumpled, dark-banded hat, Knipl wanders the city's streets in his baggy, crumpled suit, his camera slung over his back, moving steadily, if somewhat languorously, from one piddling assignment to the next, his mind cut loose in time. He positions himself and his camera on the sidewalk across the street from his morning's quarry (some fleabag hotel, say, or a low-slung office building), and as he waits out the sun's slow transit—waits, that is, until the shadows line themselves up just right—he gives himself over to reminiscence. He summons up the *smell* of soda bottles floating in the dark ice water of those refrigerator cases in the back corners of long-ago cigar and candy stores; or he decants the names of the many drinks you used to be able to order at almost any soda fountain around town—a cherry lake, a Normona, a Latin cream, a Nadjy, a vanilla Tyrol, a grape bosphorous, a Herbert water (featuring in each case the precisely calibrated combination of carbonated water, syrup, and some highly unlikely third ingredient, such as, in the case of Herbert water, half-sour milk).



Katchor in his financial-district office amid the trappings of his urban utopia, and, opposite, Knipl on the job.

BARRY MUNGER

He snaps his picture and moves on, noticing things all the while: the way, for instance, that at certain hours of the morning passing customers get reflected in the glaze of the fresh cheese Danishes piled in the vitrine beneath a certain deli's cash register. He contemplates the annual harvest of last year's phone books, or the origins of the tall lifeguard stands inhabited by store security guards on the sidewalks up and down Fourteenth Street (the irony, of course, being that when these guards get their man he drowns). Such things can set Knipl to pondering for the better part of a week. Shuffling on toward his next assignment (he is self-employed and does most of his business by way of pay phones and an answering machine), he can pass a newspaper stand and intuit an entire swath of social history, such as the sad fate of those companies which once manufactured the variously shaped iron slugs that standkeepers used to use to weigh down their piles of newspapers. Those particular manufacturers, he realizes, must have lost out some time ago to the distributors of today's cheap, freebie rectangular aluminum weights with their cigarette-company logos. Inwardly, he grieves for the iron-slug manufacturers, just as he worries about the eight-foot-long-balloon venders. (It's a tragedy, he mutters to himself, the way they unfailingly choose the wrong location—the financial district, the garment district, the sidewalk in front of the criminal court; a man forced into such a business no longer has the presence of mind to stop and consider the possible uses of an eight-foot-long balloon and so naturally has no idea where to sell them.) He wonders, too, about some of those business establishments occupying the upper stories of many of the city's older buildings—twenty floors up, and still they've bothered to have their names carefully painted on the windows facing the street, even though the names must be completely illegible to passersby down below. (Could it be that people used to have more acute eyesight in the olden days, he wonders. Or maybe there once existed a single, particularly unscrupulous sign painter who systematically worked his way up each new building, floor by floor, pointing at each level to


FELICITY
SULTAN
AT
Co

his success at convincing the denizens of the floor immediately below?)

He marvels at the eternal flame under a sauerkraut vat in one of his favorite hot-dog stands or, later on, in the park, at the perfect fit of form to function in a trash collector's litter-spearing tool. He never judges, he hardly ever acts; mainly, he just observes. He knows the location of the convertible-sofa-workers'-union cemetery, and which bus passes by its modest entrance—though not as often as it did in the olden days, owing to declining ridership.

After completing another assignment, he dives into a dairy cafeteria, and the cheap ready-made sign above the lavatory basin sets him to musing on the original Section 84 of the Public Health Code, composed by a committee of sanitation engineers back in 1921, a delicately wrought chain of argumentation setting out the legal basis for human decency—"It is in these private moments that one must reaffirm the tacit agreement that exists between all men and women"—whose graceful exposition has been hopelessly garbled and obscured over the years, streamlined and abridged beyond recognition: "Wash hands after using toilet."

Evening comes on, the light begins to fade, and Knipl heads down into the subway, bound for home. He remembers and yet he can't be sure (his universe frequently shimmers like this between precision and indeterminacy): Was he just dreaming, or didn't uniformed men once walk the inside tracks of the city's subway system? They must have been hired to inspect the rails, but they always seemed to have their heads buried in soft leather-bound manuals. (Subway regulations, he seems to recall wondering at the time, or else the Holy Bible. Or did such things happen at all?) He begins to ask himself if some of his other fond memories—the chocolate-vending machines bolted to the subway pylons, the subterranean luncheonettes, the advertising ponies—might not themselves have been of a similarly imaginary nature. In the same way that a doctor associates certain physical signs with the end of human life, Knipl knows what to expect at the last stop of any subway line: a trophy manufacturer, a movie theatre converted into a business school, the offices of a wedding orchestra, a bus drivers' uniform-and-supply store, an illegal franchise of a defunct fast-food chain, a plastic-slipcover showroom . . . Knipl notices the way a new patch of sidewalk gradually gets scuffed over to the point where it blends in with its neighboring panels—except, that is, at night, when it alone fails to sparkle. Tonight, as every night, when he curls into the narrow bed in his narrow three-room apartment, Knipl recites to himself, in a barely audible voice, a few lines from the multiple-dwelling law. He falls into a fitful sleep. His loneliness is so palpable, the density of his experience so prodigious, that it's hard to believe he's merely a cartoon character.

But that's what he is.

And he's barely five years old.

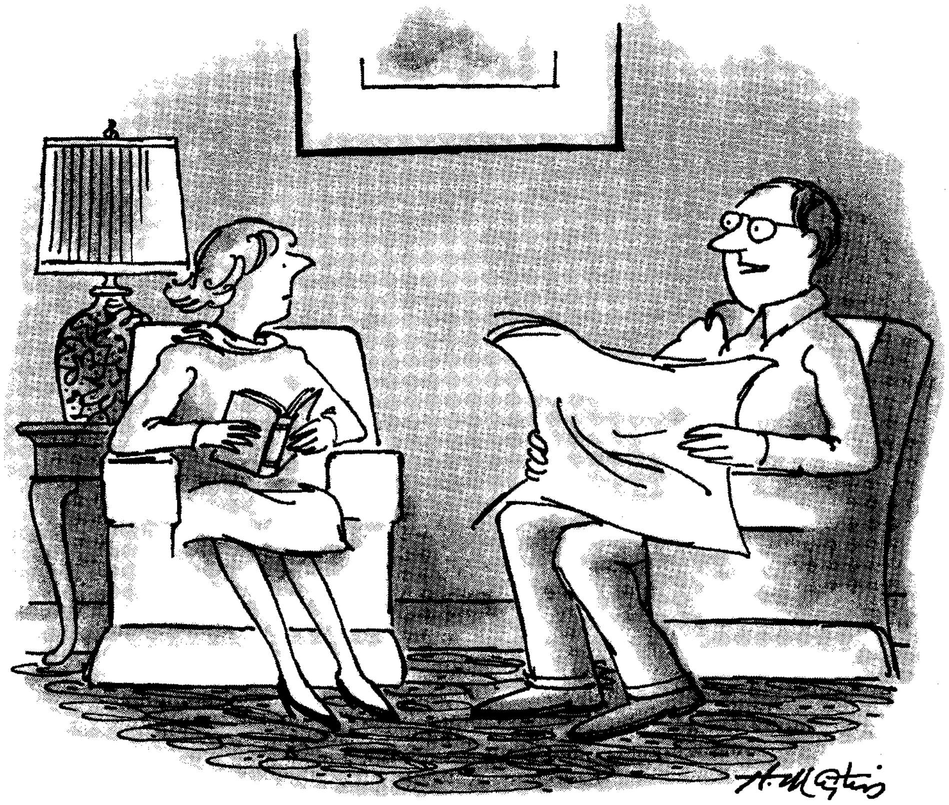
WHICH, of course, raises a question about the age of his creator—Ben Katchor—and here things really get murky. Over the phone, as we arrange an appointment, Katchor sounds, if anything, even older than Knipl. "A voice emanating from a Lower East Side Automat" is how one of Katchor's editors once described that voice for me. It is a deeply resigned voice, a sort of dispirited whine—a sigh in every phrase, a shrug in every sigh. Katchor can't imagine why anyone would want to meet him on account of the Knipl strip—he doesn't even believe that there's anyone out there actually following the strip, although Russ Smith, the founder and editor of the New York *Press*, a free weekly downtown tabloid, which has prominently showcased Knipl since the paper's inception, in April of 1988, assures me that the strip is one of the paper's most prized regular features. "I don't know," Katchor sighs repeatedly during our phone conversation. "I don't know, beats me." At length, though, he finally agrees to a meeting at his office, downtown.

On the subway ride there, I lose myself in a recent Knipl anthology, "Cheap Novelties: The Pleasures of Urban Decay" (published by Penguin in 1991), and as I emerge from the I.R.T. at Fulton Street and head east along the squeezed, narrowing nub of John Street, I feel transformed—or, rather, the world does. The neighborhood seems positively awash in Knipliana—or is it just that suddenly I'm seeing everything through a Knipl lens? There's Farouk Men's Clothing; the Roxy Food Shop; the Mahony employment agency, advertising its services from a second-floor walkup; an OTB outlet; one shop boasting its proficiency in Vulca-soling ("A nu way to resole!"), while its rival, diagonally across the street, identifies itself simply as "Shoetrician." At the address that Katchor has given me—"a low-rent office building that no self-respecting optimistic businessman would ever want to be discovered in" is how he described the place to me during our phone call—I take the elevator up eight flights, find my way to his door, and knock, and the stooped, lanky figure emerging from behind the opening door turns out to be . . . well, a kid. Hardly more than a teen-ager, from the looks of him: smooth cheeks, flowing dark hair, liquid brown eyes, a prominently bobbing Adam's apple—a beanpole swathed in a black sweater, black jeans, black socks, and white basketball sneakers. But looks can be deceiving. If (deaf) you'd only seen him—or, conversely, if (blind) you'd only heard him—you would probably never have been able to guess that he's actually forty-one years old.

Katchor opened the door wider and ushered me in. "So," he said, without missing a beat from our phone conversation, "as you can see, not much." His digs were dark, the shelves and tables covered with an as yet indeterminate clutter. While my eyes were adjusting to the gloom, he volunteered a bit of the building's history. It had first gone up around 1900, he said—"an old building, but very forward-looking for its time." For a while, the neighborhood had been a jewelry district, catering to Wall Street, and the building had been filled with such enterprises as pearl-stringing operations. He pointed to some exposed bolts in the gray painted floor, left over from some kind of light manufacture. As time went by, the building was occupied by small-time insurance outfits, clipping bureaus, and the like, but by the mid-seventies, when he moved in, almost all of them had moved out. "I've been here one full cycle," he said. "The building was nearly empty when I arrived, it filled up with artist types during the late seventies and early eighties, and now it seems to have emptied out again. I'm still here, though—or part of the time, anyway." A few years ago, he moved out of the city for the first time in his life, to Providence, Rhode Island, but he retains this place and makes a point of coming down for a few days every couple of weeks, to attend to strip business and collect fresh ideas.

My eyes were growing accustomed to the dimness now, and the clutter was beginning to differentiate into an astonishing protean hoard. Bookshelves sagged under the weight of ragged old volumes—an "Encyclopedia of Aberrations," "The Elements of Highway Engineering," "The Lexicon of the Yiddish Theater," books on magic and Victorian England and toys and obscure cults. Katchor followed my gaze. "Most of that stuff comes from the outside bins at the Strand," he said, almost apologetically. "I make it a rule never to pay more than fifty cents for a book." The shelves also held a broken accordion, a slew of dusty papier-mâché pumpkins, a couple of door-to-door-salesman trophies (little gilded men striding purposefully, their gilded briefcases swaying). Pinned up on the walls were a faded poster for the 1933 Chicago International Exposition, several New Haven bus transfers, a faded engraving of a Puerto Rican lighthouse, some cards for Capern's Finch Mix, and an array of matchbox labels. "I'm a member of the British Matchbox Label and Booklet Society," Katchor told me, waving toward a pyramid of brittle old boxes in one corner. "The serious collectors usually limit themselves to the labels alone, but, for some reason, I like the whole box—especially the ones from India." He probed among the diminutive packages—All-American, Bird's Eye, Club House ("which actually—see?—happens to have been made in Russia"), The Arc Light, Hotel Astor—and eventually turned up a few of the Indian boxes. "Incredible," he said. "The care those people showered upon such completely incidental objects—*four-color lithography!* Amazing."

Sliding open an ancient wooden filing cabinet, Katchor revealed another collection, this one of cheap, cheap novelties, cheesy toys from the days when the label "Made in Japan" had an entirely different connotation. "I like the cheapest things, the orphans, the ones hanging in the *back* of the kinds of stores that most people would never dream of stepping into in the first place. Slum toys, they're sometimes called. Like this one here." He held out a palm-size plastic doll labelled "Suk'g Baby." Carefully, almost reverently, he put it back. He pulled out a pack of toy cigarettes and then a Voice Tester, a little cardboard pad with a wooden button: push the button and you get to discover the little needle embedded inside—a regular laugh sensation. Strange things.



"Oh, and my lawyer said to say 'hi' to your lawyer."

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The building shuddered—a groan, a rattling in the rafters. "Oh, that's nothing," Katchor assured me. "Just the counterweights of the elevator. Gets so you don't even notice it."

I asked him where he had got the inspiration for Julius Knipl.

"Well, one day, several years back, I got a call from Art Spiegelman, who told me to call Russ Smith, I think that's how it was," he said. "For many years, I've contributed to *Raw*, the magazine of avant-garde comics that Spiegelman and his wife, Françoise Mouly, put out. Anyway, Smith used to run a paper in Baltimore, and now he was launching this new paper here, and Art thought that I'd be a good person to do a strip, and so I made the call and Smith made an offer. So I began to think about what I might do in that kind of format. I mean, I've been drawing cartoons ever since I was a child—in fact, I even edited a cartoon journal of my own, this thing here." He pulled out two issues of *Picture Story*—the only two issues, as it happens, one dated 1978, the other 1986. They feature his own work—long, seemingly mundane narratives that turn increasingly surreal—and also strange and remarkable contributions by such like-visioned spirits as Jerry Moriarty, Martin Millard, Peter Blegvad, Mark Beyer, and an anonymous Dutch artist (circa 1840). "Nobody wants this sort of thing," Katchor conceded dispiritedly. "There's no market. Bookstores won't stock them, and when you attempt to get comics places to carry them it's like pouring vinegar into Coke and trying to sell that. Pathetic. So, anyway, here was a chance to do something on a more regular basis, and I wanted to come up with something more—what should I say?—*commercial.* I realized that with a strip you need a principal character who can carry the action of the story from week to week, but I was having a hard time figuring what my character should be. I was mulling that over— Now, remember, this was five years ago, and in those days real estate was still hot, and photography was hot, and so, well, I figured *real-estate photography!* That ought to be hot.” He paused, winced, shook his head disconsolately. “I know, I know—desperate. Just shows you.”

I asked him where he got the name “Knipl.”

“It’s Yiddish,” he said. “And it’s one of those Yiddish words you can’t really translate. It’s sort of a nest egg, you know, the little treasure you store away for a rainy day—they say, ‘That’s your knipl.’ And the strip’s all about the little treasures of the city—not exactly this city, but almost. This city in some slightly different time—maybe just before I was born. And, in fact, what Knipl does is what I, as a child, thought all grownups did—you know, head out into the city, walk around all day, have these little adventures. So it’s the past but at the same time not the past, it’s very much the present—though maybe it’s true that that way of *looking* has been dying out. Everywhere you go these days, there’s still so much of the old stuff preserved, as if in a state of perpetual decay, right there, just beneath all the superficial modernizations—the buildings with their sleek new lobbies, and one flight up you’re back in the nineteenth century. And this strip gives me a chance to catalogue all that, to work toward something like an encyclopedia of the city. My utopian city, with all its little horrible things. Or maybe not utopian—idealized, rather. The strip is the closest I can come to approximating my perfect city.”

And Knipl, I asked—how old is he?

“Oh, I don’t know,” Katchor replied, seemingly confounded by the question. “Kind of my age, I guess. Forty maybe, forty-five.” (“Yeah,” Art Spiegelman subsequently agreed, when I passed along this estimate of Katchor’s. Spiegelman said he, too, had often wondered about Knipl’s age. “But the way forty looks when you’re fifteen years old.” Perhaps. Or maybe *that’s* the secret of Knipl’s age: he’s invariably twenty-five years older than anyone who happens to be reading about him.) “Forty, forty-five,” Katchor repeated. “He’s like one of those guys you pass in the world—in the elevator, say—who always seem to be wearing their father’s baggy clothes. Though, incidentally, my strips are a big success in Italy. They used to get serialized there in *Dolce Vita*, a now-defunct Milan comics journal. Knipl runs in alternative papers in Miami, Washington, Seattle, Fairfield County, and half a dozen other places—the smaller the venue, it seems, the greater the visibility. And, oh, yeah, in San Diego. I have no idea what they make of it in San Diego. But in Italy, maybe, I guess, they loved my strips because of their *look*. The baggy pants, the oversized jackets—just like all those upscale Italian designers.”

IMAGINE

Once I spoke a foreign language
in a dream—like skating, like swimming in air,
like flying.
I was able to reach
the doctor, was able to save
the loved one, able to make myself

understood. The looks askance,
the dumb stares,
were nods and smiles:
agreement.
A white-coat bureaucrat turned
obliging, allowed me into intensive care

to be with the loved one, who was dying.
I spoke the most foreign language.
I loved, I hoped,
I dreamed
that I said the needful thing.
Buen morir, or *There, there.*

I could say everything.
No, I could speak
no foreign language.
I was not able.
Not having done a thing, except in a dream.
I was not there.

—ELIZABETH MACKLIN

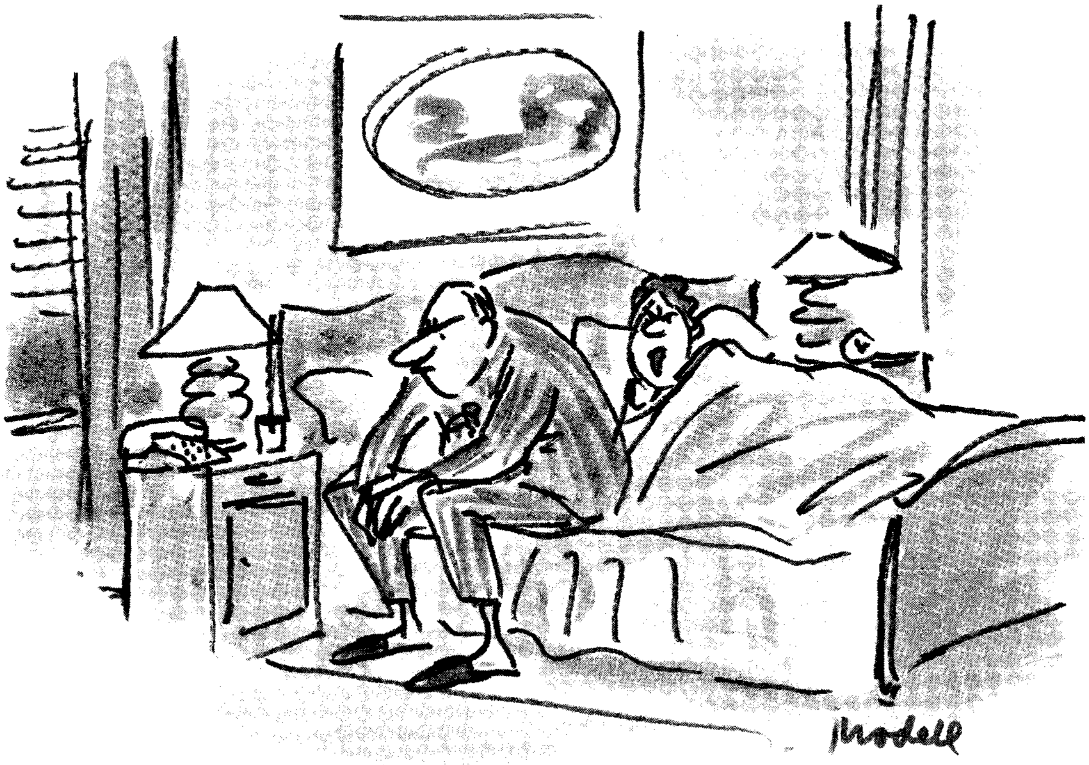
I asked Katchor about his father. Was he an inspiration for Knipl?

“Not really,” he replied. “Not exactly. See, Knipl never really gets involved, he just observes. My father was much more political. He was a Communist Yiddishist from Warsaw whom fate pushed into becoming a landlord. Actually, he’d apprenticed as a tailor, but then he emigrated, first to Palestine and then to Brazil, and he must have got into farming somewhere along the line, because when he eventually arrived here he first ran a combination chicken farm and Communist hotel up in Saratoga. He had a wife and son. His son enlisted in the Army at the very outset of the war, even though as an only child on a farm he didn’t have to. He served as a mechanic on a bomber, got shot down over Africa, killed. I’m the replacement son.

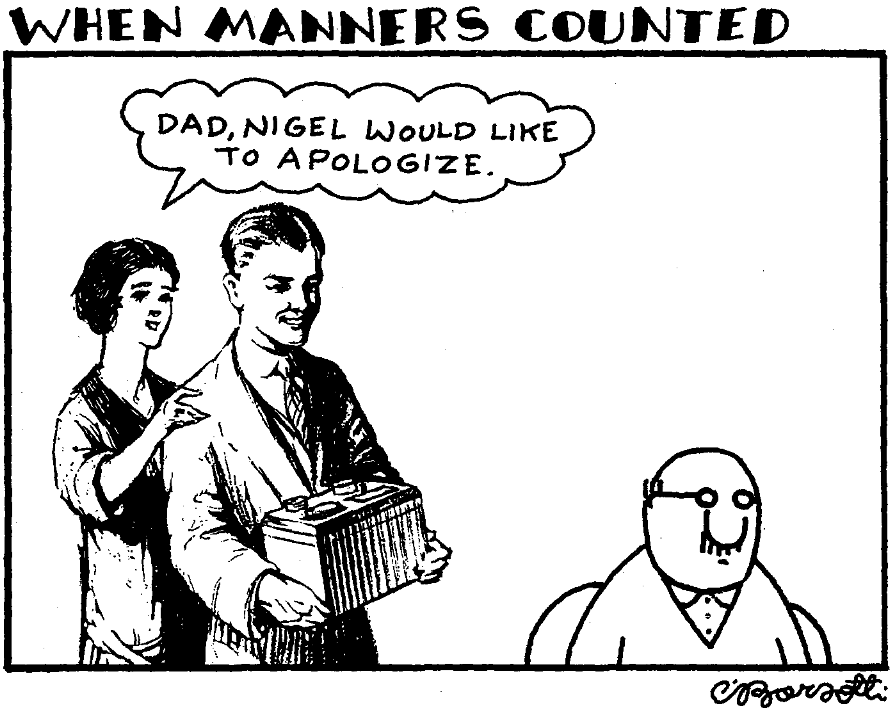
“After his son’s death, my father traded his farm and hotel for an apartment building in Bed-Stuy and became a small-time landlord, so it was through him that I got to see the inside of that pathetic business. He got a new wife, my mother. She’d been a nurse, but after they were married she was—well, my mother. He never really talked about his first wife—there was a plaster bust of her in a straw basket in the basement, and that’s basically all I ever knew of her. But my father was very political, all wrapped up in utopian schemes: about, for instance, how he was going to transform his apartment building into a commune of some kind, which he eventually did—a complete disaster. That, or how he was going to go to the Soviet Union and teach them advanced methods of chicken farming. Which he never did. But he was very involved. He was the one who took *me* to the S.D.S. headquarters. He was so political that he used up all the space for politics in the family—so that the sixties kind of passed me by. I was buried in comics."

Katchor continued, "I mean, occasionally my father serves as an inspiration for some of the things that run through Knipl. For instance, the stuff a while back about the Drowned Men's Association." Every once in a while, Knipl meanders off, over several installments, into odd, wispy, curlicue subplots. Katchor was referring to a sequence last fall that intimated the existence of an upstate rural asylum for failed small-time businessmen: "At five o'clock each evening, a bus waits on the corner of Roman Boulevard and Rossel Avenue to save those men who have gone under for the third time," one caption says, over a drawing of an idling bus with the logo "Good Riddance" plastered on its side. The place was a retreat for such acquaintances of Knipl's as the journeyman salesman for Golden Calf Brand Pot Cheese, whose desire to make money, after sixteen years, "suddenly went dry, like the rubber gasket on an old refrigerator door." One day he was just gone—his family had no idea where—but "his co-workers seemed to understand." One of them is portrayed shovelling paraphernalia from the top of the salesman's abandoned desk into an open box ("The instinct to survive is perishable," the officemate mutters, "it also has an expiration date") and then depositing the box out back with the trash ("Carbon copies of every order he took," the deadpan caption notes, "a densely packed Rolodex, scraps of paper filled with promising leads and a map of his territory were placed on public display for twenty-four hours"). The pot-cheese man, the salesman for Tsimtsum Industries (purveyors of artificial-leather phylacteries, polyester prayer shawls, and assorted novelty mezuzoth), and a defeated kitchen-set vender named Johnny Sumac: they all make their way to the bus and are transported to an idyllic communal resort, where the operators "even run a diesel engine on tracks across the basement of the dormitory building, every twenty minutes, all night long"—or so a contribution-soliciting man in sandwich boards explains to Knipl, back in town, at the local cafeteria, while proffering a collection pan labelled D.M.A. Knipl deposits a quarter. "Why save a man from drowning, only to let him die of homesickness?" The final panel shows a man in a sleeveless undershirt sleeping on a narrow bed, a full moon streaming through a leafy window, and the sound "RUMBABA" welling up from below. (Katchor is great with sounds.) "Number seven uptown local," the saved drowned man dreams.

"And, obviously, that whole sequence harks back to my father," Katchor said. "But, if anything, it's been my own experiences that have provided the bulk of the inspiration for the Knipl strip. Just out of school, for example, there were three of us who started this little typesetting-and-graphics business. None of us wanted to get up early, and this was something where you could do the work itself late at night. You could work out of very cheap premises, and it was a way of making modest money fresh from Day One. Not a lot, but—well, barely enough to live on, actually. But it really exposed us to a world. We did everything—pasteup and layout for real low-end magazines, fortune-telling flyers, gypsy palm cards, self-published rants. We typeset books on iridology—you know, the science of diagnosing disease through the patterns and lines in the irises of people's eyes. We produced stickers for cheap watches—'Fourteen carat,' that kind of thing—and takeout-deli menus, fish labels for the Fulton Fish Market, come-on pamphlets for dubious wholesale enterprises. Walking along the street, we'd constantly be coming upon our stuff, discarded, in the gutters. It was gruesome. But going out to drum up that kind of business, the people who came in through the door—this is how I learned all about small business." In the biographical notes accompanying his early contributions to the



"Safe sex is the last thing you need to concern yourself about."


WHEN MANNERS COUNTED
DAD, NIGEL WOULD LIKE TO APOLOGIZE.
C. Barsotti

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first several issues of *Raw*, back in the early eighties, Katchor himself was identified simply as "a small businessman."

"And I filter all that through Knipl," Katchor said. "I mean, not literally—I make things up. For instance, the whole bit about the newspaper-weight manufacturers. I invented an entire industry solely from my imagination, but then one day a few weeks later I got a letter from this old guy, retired upstate, telling me how he himself had been in that very business—the letter was written on very old-fashioned stationery with a little engraving of the factory itself up in the corner—and he thanked me profusely for, as he put it, 'memorializing it as it really was.' "

I ASKED Katchor a bit more about his childhood—where he grew up, how he got into comics. "My first several years, our family lived in Bed-Stuy, but when I was in the second grade we moved to Crown Heights, to an apartment between Washington and Franklin, where Carol Street dead-ends into the shuttle line. I have a terrible sense of dates, but I remember that just before my first year of high school every white person I knew up and moved to Coney Island, almost from one day to the next."

Why hadn't his family moved?

"I don't know. Somebody had to be the last white family, I guess. Everybody else saw it coming. Maybe my father thought it would stop at fifty-fifty. But we stayed on there for several more years, and I went to Erasmus High, in Flatbush, and eventually the family moved to the other side of Prospect Park, to Kensington. My father died there, a few years later, in 1971."

After a moment, he went on, "As I say, though, the main thing I remember from all those years was the immersion in comics. I was hardly alone. All my friends were art historians of the comics, connoisseurs of individual styles, veritable Berensons of exquisitely refined sensibility. We not only knew all the artists, we knew all the *inkers*—we could tell when they changed inkers! We'd analyze every frame, debate each gesture. My own favorite strip was Steve Ditko's 'Spider-Man'—this was a decidedly minority taste. Most of the other kids went for the muscle-bound superheroes, and Spider-Man was more scrawny and sinewy. In fact, it wasn't his adventures that excited me so much as the drawing—the stories were good enough, but they were just an excuse for the drawing, whose energy thrilled me. I used to spend hours studying Ditko's conceptualized anatomy, the way he manipulated his characters through space, observing them from every angle, in every position. Somehow, I intuitively realized that this was only a few steps removed from the most serious and elevated forms of representational drawing. I mean, I never went to galleries or anything—this was my art education. And I had my own ongoing strip—a plainclothes-adventure-detective-spy saga. I did attend some classes at the Brooklyn Museum Art School—had a teacher there with sense enough not to discourage me, figured I'd outgrow it.

"And, in a sense, I did. I set aside my cartooning when I went to Brooklyn College. I majored in painting—there, and then for a stint at Visual Arts, and then back to Brooklyn College—and studied the history of art. But I still found myself most attracted to work that told a story, that explored character, that elaborated a philosophical idea. I loved Poussin, for instance. And, as time passed, I found myself thinking about comics again. Only, now I wanted to see if I could render them with all the density of a novel. The point is that, because they exist there on a page, the reader ought to be able to stop, to go back, to step back and get a sense of the whole, to focus in on a single detail. It's not like film, where you're inexorably propelled forward. In comics you can get lost in a single panel for half an hour—and, ideally, the panel ought to be able to bear the weight of that kind of attention."

I asked Katchor about film. Fans of the Knipl strip often characterize its visual style as that of film noir—particularly the free-floating, seemingly untethered point of view, with its frequently uncanny foreshortenings. In one panel, the vantage may be the ceiling fan's, while in the next it becomes the curb's. Tight closeups give way to wide scans. Had he been much influenced by film?

"On the contrary," Katchor assured me. "It's the film-noir directors, or so I've been told, who were influenced by the same comic strips that influenced me. Maybe that's where they got the idea for their strange vantages. But those odd angles are never indulged in for their own sake—not in Knipl, anyway. They're intended in part to keep things fresh, in part to highlight some sort of relationship that might not otherwise suggest itself, and mainly to *reveal* things, to reveal deeper levels in the narrative."

The style of Katchor's narration is likewise extraordinarily sophisticated and deeply layered. In fact, there are generally no fewer than three separate narrative strands coursing concurrently through a Knipl strip. The captions, the voice balloons, and the images all move at their own distinctive pace, often at cross-purposes—competing streams of consciousness. I've heard Knipl described as "a two-bit Leopold Bloom," and the phrase seems to refer not just to his mode of being, the exalted attentiveness lavished on the most mundane of concerns, but also to the manner in which that being, his very consciousness, gradually gets divulged. I asked Katchor to what extent modernist literature had been an influence on his style.

"I don't know," he replied. "Not that much. I mean, I read 'Ulysses,' 'A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man.' I particularly admire Nabokov. I like William James a lot, the poetical way he is able to describe states of mind. I am fascinated by Henry Mayhew, the Victorian sociologist who undertook an incredible dissection of the way the lowliest Londoners managed to live their lives. I get letters every once in a while from a guy in Kansas assuring me that I must have been enormously influenced by the French post-structuralists, people like Georges Perec, but, frankly, I haven't really read them that much, and there, again, the point is, rather, that we share a common source—they, too, were reared on comic strips.

"No, the biggest influence is the strip itself, the challenge posed by each new empty panel. I am deeply engaged by the conflict, the tension, between words and pictures—the way in which the image doesn't have to just illustrate the words but can range quite far afield. At first, you do it just out of boredom—who wants to be slavishly illustrating words all the time? But then it gets to be a value in itself. I spend a lot of time thinking about thinking, about the different tracks that thought and perception regularly take, how they diverge and then realign, how the divergences themselves at times disguise deeper alignments—all that. In that sense, I'm not a Surrealist, as some people sometimes claim—I'm a *naturalist*. This is what thinking is like, it seems to me, what remembering is like—or, in Knipl's case, what remembering remembering is like."

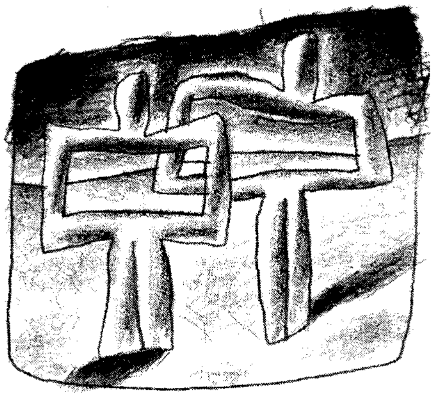
OR dreaming that you're remembering remembering.

Knipl is by no means the only outlet for Katchor's creative sensibility. Over the last year, he was simultaneously producing an entirely different and, if anything, even stranger weekly strip, "The Jew of New York," which climaxed a fifty-two-week run in the April 9, 1993, issue of the English-language weekly, the *Forward*, heir to the old Yiddish *Forverts*.

"You've heard of *that*?" Katchor stammered, incredulous, when I brought up the subject. "I didn't think *anybody* had heard of that. I mean, I know the editor read it, but I can't imagine anybody else did. That strip didn't really go anywhere until about the thirtieth installment. It just kind of wandered around—the wandering strip. But I guess it was serving its function. It filled a space."

Filling a space was indeed precisely how it began—the space left empty, that is, when the *Forward's* serialization of Art Spiegelman's *Maus II* ended, in early 1992. The *Forward's* cultural editor, Jonathan Rosen—at Spiegelman's urging—asked Katchor whether he'd like to take over the slot. Rosen's successor, Philip Gourevitch, has assured me that in fact "The Jew of New York" was passionately followed. "Each week, when a new installment arrived, we'd all gather around and try to figure out what it all meant," he told me. "The drawing was magnificent; the plotting—well, it was complicated. But there were people who subscribed to the *Forward* for that strip alone. Others didn't have a clue to what was going on in it, and some of *those* subscribed for its sake alone."

"The Jew of New York" took place in 1830 and appeared to be historically rooted—in part, anyway. The action revolved (and receded and recoiled and recanted and reverted) around the imminent production of a new play at the Bowery's New World Theatre—a play that was a thinly veiled satire on the at-that-time-recent fiasco involving the proto-Zionist "Mordecai Manuel Noah (1786-1851)," who in 1825 had somehow "acquired Grand Island, in the Niagara River, near Buffalo"—this according to Katchor's opening caption—and then "proclaimed himself governor and judge of Israel and called for the ingathering of all Jews, including the Karaites, Samaritans, American Indians and other lost tribes of Israel." The caption goes on, "He called his 'City of Refuge' Ararat. Nothing came of this grandiose scheme. The Jews remained scattered, Noah went on to become a literary and political lion of New York City, and there our story begins."



"The Jew of New York" was not Noah himself but, rather, the name of the play about him. Noah himself barely appeared in the strip at all (another instance of Katchor's near-maniacal penchant for indirection). But dozens of other, vividly imagined characters did appear, in ever more confounding interrelationships. Among them were Samson Gergel, the New World Theatre's scenic decorator and token Jew; Maynard Daizy, the theatre's pompous leading man, who was presently going to attempt to embody the starring role; Isaac Azarael, a middleman in the Oriental button trade; Nathan Kishon, a disbarred *shochet*, or ritual slaughterer, who, disappointed in Noah's utopia, instead spent five years in the wilderness, emerged with a trove of beaver pelts, and returned to Manhattan, where each evening he abandoned his hotel room to sleep in a plot of grass across the street, as naked as an Indian; "a man in a vulcanized India rubber suit" who meandered along and into the North River, reading from a damp old pamphlet containing evidence for concluding that Indian tribes were indeed of Hebrew descent; an Indian named Elim-min-nopee (a quintessentially Katchorian construction: l-m-n-o-p), who in fact did recite the Psalms, in perfect Hebrew, every Friday as part of a novelty act; Hershel Goulbat, a violently competitive impresario and Elim-min-nopee's manager, who one evening mistook the sleeping Kishon for a potential rival; Francis Oriole, a fervent entrepreneur with a scheme for carbonating all of Lake Erie in an attempt to cash in on the recent craze for seltzer water; Enoch Letushim, a Palestinian messenger in town peddling soil from the Holy Land; Yosl Feinbroyt, a latter-day disciple of the famed Kabbalist Abraham Abulafia; Mr. Marah, a schemer seemingly intent on stripping Kishon of his beaver pelts; and, toward the end of the strip's run, Professor Solidus, a weirdly veiled playwright and renowned anti-Semitic pamphleteer, whose fear of hotels compelled him to reside on the third floor of the New World Theatre, where his latest comedy, "The Jew of New York," was about to open. The strip offered a dizzying concentrate of plot, culminating when Samson Gergel's most inspired staging device—a vat of herring simmering in vinegar and water in the theatre's cellar, whose smells were to be piped up to the audience each time Maynard Daizy made one of his ostentatious entrances—caught fire, bringing down the entire place.

The fact is that, far from being unknown, Katchor's "The Jew of New York" proved decidedly controversial, though in an oddly Kniplian fashion. At any rate, it aroused the righteous indignation of Morris U. Schappes, an American Jewish historian who is the editor of *Jewish Currents*, the nearly half-century-old democratic, socialist, pro-Israel, non-Zionist journal of the Association for the Promotion of Jewish Secularism. In June of last year, early in the strip's trajectory, Schappes used the pages of his magazine to rail against this new apparition on the scene, assuring his readers that, though he had two entire books on the actual, true-life Mordecai Manuel Noah on his shelf at home, he could find no reference either to a play entitled "The Jew of New York" or to a New World Theatre in New York. Also, he noted, with an argument-clinching chop, Noah's birthdate was 1785, not 1786. What, he demanded to know, was Katchor using as his source?

In a subsequent issue of the journal, Schappes recorded how "On June 15 I received a letter from Mr. Katchor complaining I had misunderstood him and asking me to 'Do the right thing and print a correction.' Then he [Katchor] added: 'My strip is the fevered dream of an amateur historian in which the "real" lives of New York Jews, c. 1830, are fleshed out and given the breath of poetic truth. There was a "New World Theatre" on the Bowery in New York City. I saw it in my dream. I swear.' " This reply left Schappes almost speechless. "What," he asked his readers, "was I to make of this effusion?"

I mentioned Schappes's consternation to Katchor—here, at least, was one other person who had followed the strip.

"Ah, yes," Katchor conceded, shaking his head mournfully. "My polemic. Our pitiful little controversy. But it's really true what I wrote him: I came upon Noah in a footnote—that's all I knew about him. I didn't know anything about him, which is why I did the strip. Knipl is everything I know; 'The Jew of New York' was everything I don't know. And those were indeed the dreams of an amateur historian: he did a little research, he went to sleep, and those were his fevered imaginings."

KATCHOR looked at the clock on the wall. (He doesn't wear a watch.) "Oh," he said. "It's getting late. I have to be catching my train back to Providence. My wife will be waiting."

"*He told you about his wife*?" Art Spiegelman sputtered, astonished, when I recounted to him my visit with Katchor a few days later. "I knew him *well*—worked with him on a regular basis—for over seven years, and the entire time I never knew he was married."

Russ Smith made a similar comment. "One evening at a party, he came up to me, shyly, as usual—he's the most modest, self-effacing artist I've ever known—and he introduced a woman, saying, 'This is my wife.' I was flabbergasted. Not only that: turns out he has a teenage kid as well."

The point is not exactly that Katchor is shy; I mean, he is shy, he's very shy. But, rather, it's that usually he doesn't seem to want to burden you with the weight of such inconsequential bits of knowledge.

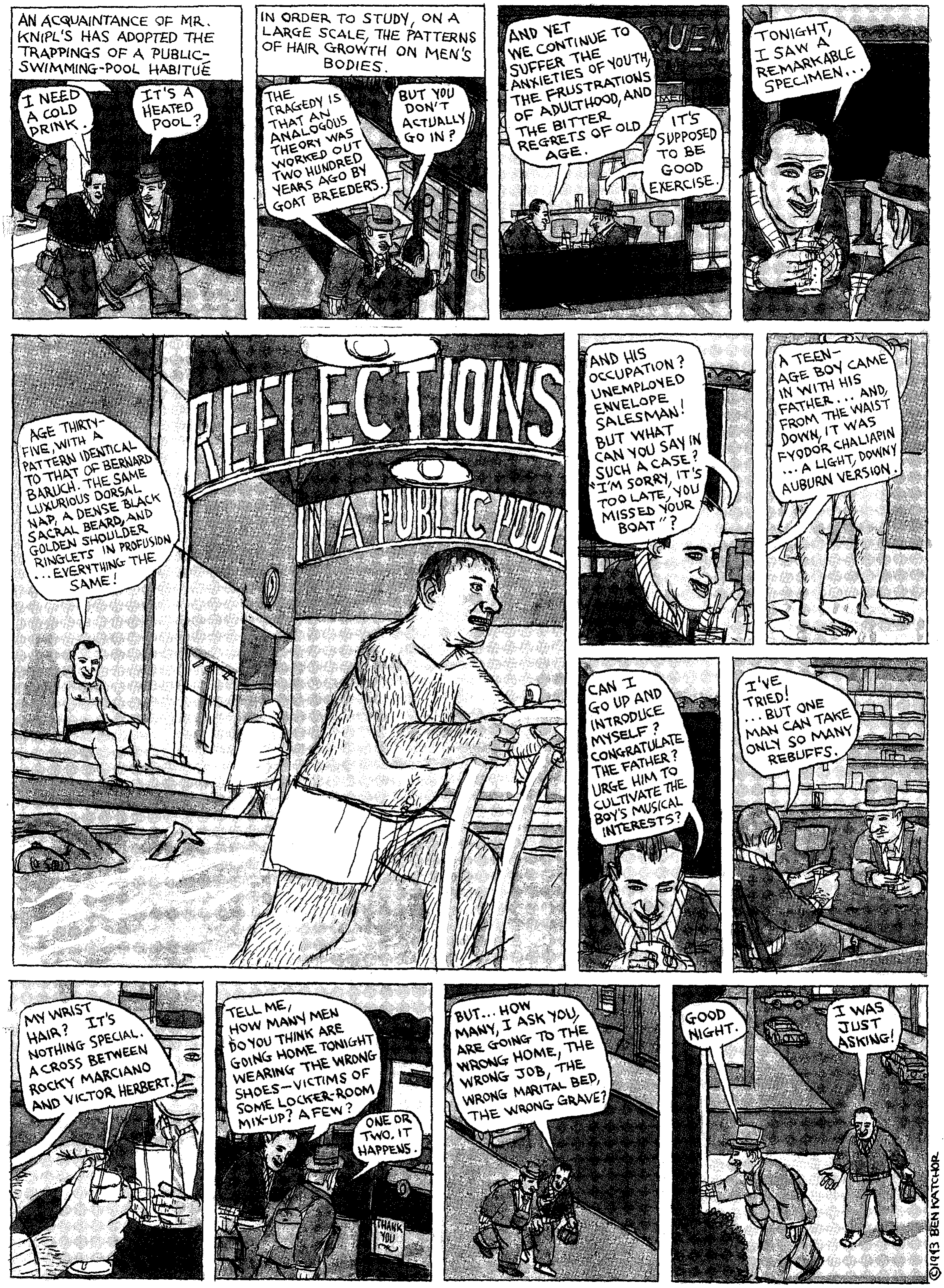
As he was assembling his papers and sketches and sliding them into a satchel, however, he even mentioned his daughter to me—his stepdaughter, actually. "She's finishing high school, and she really has no use for comics," he said. "It's like me and my father, I guess. Your parents, whatever they're into, it ruins it for you. She finds comic strips terribly boring—I don't push them on her. She sees the strip business for what it is. Terribly hard work, a miserable way to make a living. Pathetic. Hopeless."

I asked him why his family had moved up to Providence. (My friend who has called Knipl "a two-bit Leopold Bloom" surmises that Providence must be Katchor's Trieste.)

"We needed a change," he said. "Both my wife and I grew up and spent our whole lives here in New York City, but it was getting too hard—too expensive, too cramped. I mean, in a better world we'd have gone to Paris or London or something. Providence was easier to arrange. We heard about it because the Knipl strip runs in a small paper up there, and some people told us it was a good place. It's all right—there are remnants of a city there. And anyway, the room I work in, that's really not Rhode Island." He paused. "And it's good to get a little distance. Here there's so much stuff it's like I have to shut it out. There I'm dying for it. Like the sound of a car going over a manhole cover, the rattle it makes. There, I don't know what it is—they must bolt the manholes down or something, it's a sound you never hear. And it's a sound you can grow to crave."

He zipped his satchel shut, made a quick last survey of the premises. I suggested that he might be forgetting his notebook. "No," he said. "I don't keep a notebook. If I had a notebook, I'd be terrified of losing it. No, I come down here, get my ideas for Knipl, and record them on little scraps of paper." He patted his various pockets. "Actually, this has been a relatively good trip; I'm going home with a few possible ideas." He reached into his back pocket and pulled out a crumpled scrap of paper. "Let's see. Oh, yeah. The brass property lines they embed in concrete sidewalks—what are they for? Fear of lawsuits, maybe." He pulled a scrap out of his shirt pocket. "The milking of the turnstiles—how they go around hooking canvas buckets under the subway turnstiles, extracting the tokens." He turned the scrap over, put it back in his pocket, pulled out another. "The orientation of men's body hair: I mean, the actual *direction* in which it lies on the body, the patterns. . . ." He returned that scrap to its pocket and then was silent for a moment. "The best ones are things I never saw the interest in before. Like, today I was walking down the street and noticed a very faded, tattered, almost illegible old sign, a sign from—who knows?—maybe forty, fifty years ago, warning about rat poison." He smiled, wonderingly. "I mean, think about it: the rats are long gone, the people who posted the warning are gone, the people they were warning are gone. The sign's still there. It's a knipl." ♦

A KNIPL ORIGINAL, BY BEN KATCHOR


AN ACQUAINTANCE OF MR. KNIPL'S HAS ADOPTED THE TRAPPINGS OF A PUBLIC-SWIMMING-POOL HABITUÉ
I NEED A COLD DRINK.
IT'S A HEATED POOL?
IN ORDER TO STUDY, ON A LARGE SCALE, THE PATTERNS OF HAIR GROWTH ON MEN'S BODIES.
THE TRAGEDY IS THAT AN ANALOGOUS THEORY WAS WORKED OUT TWO HUNDRED YEARS AGO BY GOAT BREEDERS.
BUT YOU DON'T ACTUALLY GO IN?
AND YET WE CONTINUE TO SUFFER THE ANXIETIES OF YOUTH, THE FRUSTRATIONS OF ADULTHOOD, AND THE BITTER REGRETS OF OLD AGE.
IT'S SUPPOSED TO BE GOOD EXERCISE.
TONIGHT, I SAW A REMARKABLE SPECIMEN...
REFLECTIONS IN A PUBLIC POOL
AGE THIRTY-FIVE, WITH A PATTERN IDENTICAL TO THAT OF BERNARD BARUCH. THE SAME LUXURIOUS DORSAL NAP, A DENSE BLACK SACRAL BEARD, AND GOLDEN SHOULDER RINGLETS IN PROFUSION ...EVERYTHING THE SAME!
AND HIS OCCUPATION? UNEMPLOYED ENVELOPE SALESMAN! BUT WHAT CAN YOU SAY IN SUCH A CASE? "I'M SORRY, IT'S TOO LATE, YOU MISSED YOUR BOAT"?
A TEEN-AGE BOY CAME IN WITH HIS FATHER... AND, FROM THE WAIST DOWN, IT WAS FYODOR CHALIAPIN ...A LIGHT, DOWNY AUBURN VERSION.
CAN I GO UP AND INTRODUCE MYSELF? CONGRATULATE THE FATHER? URGE HIM TO CULTIVATE THE BOY'S MUSICAL INTERESTS?
I'VE TRIED! ...BUT ONE MAN CAN TAKE ONLY SO MANY REBUFFS.
MY WRIST HAIR? IT'S NOTHING SPECIAL. A CROSS BETWEEN ROCKY MARCIANO AND VICTOR HERBERT.
TELL ME, HOW MANY MEN DO YOU THINK ARE GOING HOME TONIGHT WEARING THE WRONG SHOES—VICTIMS OF SOME LOCKER-ROOM MIX-UP? A FEW?
ONE OR TWO, IT HAPPENS.
THANK YOU
BUT... HOW MANY, I ASK YOU, ARE GOING HOME, THE WRONG JOB, THE WRONG MARITAL BED, THE WRONG GRAVE?
GOOD NIGHT.
I WAS JUST ASKING!
©1993 BEN KATCHOR

FICTION

MOSQUITOES

BY ALLEGRA GOODMAN

THERE is no one behind the desk at the Airport Green Shuttle Service, and no customers are waiting at the counter. Ed thinks he must be in the wrong place. He's been travelling for ten days. Customers mob the other shuttle counters. Ed waits fifteen minutes and then tows his bags over to a pay phone. "Markowitz?" someone calls out. An enormously heavy woman rushes up to him with a clipboard. "Peterstown?" she asks, out of breath. "Christians and Jews—Ecumenical Institute?"

Ed nods grimly.

"All right." She heaves herself behind the desk. "Let me do this—receipt. Mark you paid for."

"Where is the bus?" Ed asks.

"I have to bring it out front," she says. She picks up his suitcase, and he follows her out to the curb, where a young man is waiting, reading Origen.

"Are you going to the Peterstown conference?" Ed asks him.

"No, sir, I'm going to St. Peter's College to join the faculty. My name is Pat Flanagan." The young man says all this with such alacrity that Ed stares at him. Flanagan shakes his hand vigorously.

"Theology?" Ed asks.

"Primarily philosophy." The minivan pulls up with the heavy woman at the wheel. "I'm interested in *demonstratio Dei*—natural theology, proofs of God's existence," Flanagan explains, as they drive off.

"Descartes?" Ed asks.

"Oh, yes."

"Yeah, I remember that from college." Ed had never liked philosophy. "But what was the story with him? His whole proof turned out to be circular, right?"

"Circular?" Flanagan ponders this. "I've never thought so."

Ed leans against the rattling van window. He'd accepted the Peterstown invitation because the honorarium covered his trip out to the Hoover Institution and the Berkeley conference on the intifada. But after ten days and three speaking engagements in the Bay Area, he just isn't up to another conference. He can't wait to get back home, to Georgetown.

They drive out on the highway into the cornfields, past gleaming silos and Howard Johnson restaurants—each set back from the road on landscaped acreage. There are cows, as well, and some city instinct in Ed makes him want to say aloud, "Cows." He looks at Flanagan across the aisle and holds it in. "When do we get there?" he asks the driver.

"We stop about one o'clock," she says.

Not for another hour, he realizes, and he tries to sleep.

At last they pull up into a Holiday Inn parking lot, and he staggers off the van after the driver. She looks at him. "Can I have my bags?" he asks, fumbling in his wallet.

"This isn't Peterstown," she says. "This is the bathroom break."

"Where the hell are we?" Ed asks Pat Flanagan in the men's room.

"This is St. Cloud. Peterstown is two and a half hours west of here."

Ed dabs his face with a wet paper towel.

"It's a little remote," Pat admits. "But it's very pristine."

ST. PETER'S COLLEGE stands on a sweeping hill above a lake. Beyond the lake there are trees. There is no sign of a town. Flanagan shakes hands again with Ed and strides off into a huge cruciform building on the crest of the hill. Then the van rattles down a side road to the lake. There is no Institute in sight, no sign of human habitation. The driver unloads Ed's suitcases, and Ed stands with his bags on a grassy meadow in front of the broad lake, the water rippling slightly in the breeze. "Wait!" he calls after the driver, but she slides the van door shut and leaves him there.

Staring at the hillside, Ed sees chimneys and vents poking through the lush green turf. He drags himself down to the lake and finds that the Institute is composed entirely of terraced sod houses dug into the ground. Each opens onto the lake with glass sliding doors, and there are at least a dozen of these buildings, although they are nearly invisible from the road. A beaming man strides out from one of the houses—a large man, looking like a cross between a bear and a Buick, with a big chest, broad shoulders, and a polished dome of a forehead. "You must be Ed; you're the second to last. The others all came this morning. My name is Matthew."

"Matthew—" Ed hesitates.

"Brother Matthew. I'm just filling in as a liaison between the college and the Institute—making sure you're all comfortable. Follow me. We've got you down at the end, in Lama House."

"What does that stand for?" Ed asks.

"The Dalai Lama. We've got each of the houses named after a spiritual leader."

"Quite a setup."

"We had a competition for the design ten years back," Matthew says, "and this concept really stole our hearts. The idea of living in the ground in complete humility in front of that view. The semicircular formation of the houses stands for tolerance and equality—there are a lot of symbols here—and of course all that sod is wonderful in the winter. We have our winter fellows living here with their families, and they love the insulation. Here we are. Let's just rap on the door and see if your housemate is around. Hello, Bob? He must be asleep. Let's just get your bags inside. Bob Hemmings is our Presbyterian."

"In what sense?" Ed asks.

"For the conference," Matthew says.

"Oh, you've got one of each flavor?" Ed mutters.

"Yes, that's exactly right. Well, I'll let you settle in."

"Oh, wait." Ed calls him back. "Can I have my key?"

"We don't have keys," Matthew says. "It's easier that way. In any case, there aren't any locks. It was one of the special features in the design."

The front room in the little house is a combination living room and kitchen. Behind, in the shadows, is the bathroom, flanked by bedroom doors. Ed opens the door on the right and finds Bob Hemmings stretched out on his back in his underwear listening to a Walkman. Hemmings jumps up and pushes off his earphones. "Hi, there!" he cries out. He's a deep-voiced man, well over six feet. Ed feels suddenly exhausted from the earnest welcomes he has been receiving all day. He misses the peckishness of the academics in California, the sullen diffidence of his students in Georgetown.

“LISTEN,” Ed says to Bob, after he has showered and changed, “is there any food in here? I missed lunch.”

“No, we’re having all our meals up at the college,” Bob says. “See, here’s your meal card. They left it on the table. The dining hall opens for dinner at six.”

“Can we walk to town?”

“Well, I’m game.” Bob stretches out his lanky frame. “It’s a bit of a hike, though.”

“How far?”

“Well, we could do it in an hour.”

Ed flops on the couch. “Isn’t there a convenience store around here someplace?”

“Not that I know of. Oh, but just a sec. I saved an apple from lunch. It’s in my room.”

“What is this, a prison?” Ed mutters, staring at his meal card.

“I love it here,” Bob says. “I took my study leave here last winter.”

“Where do you teach?” Ed asks.

“Well, I preach. I’ve got a ministry in Syracuse.”

“Oh,” Ed says. “Where’s the conference schedule?”

“I haven’t seen one. We’re supposed to convene at dinner. I guess we’ll find out what’s up when we get there.”

“Fine,” Ed says. “Great.” He strides into his bedroom and shuts the door.

“I’ll leave the apple on the table for you,” Bob calls after him.

“Oh, uh, thank you,” Ed says.

“Sure thing!” Bob sings out.

Ed’s room contains a bed and a chair, but no desk. He puts his suitcase on the bed and rummages through his toiletries case. He takes out his green roll-on mosquito repellent and rubs it all over his arms and neck. He hasn’t seen any mosquitoes yet, but he’s been warned. He’s heard stories back in Washington. Then, of course, the airport concession stands in Minneapolis were full of T-shirts and coffee mugs picturing “The State Bird.” He stretches out and falls asleep.

PASTOR BOB is gone by the time Ed ventures out into the front room. It’s after six, and he rushes out with his meal card to search for the dining hall. A thin, gray-haired man lopes up the path just ahead. He is wearing a yarmulke.

“You’re going to the Institute dinner?” Ed calls out.

“Oh, yes,” the man sighs. “Who are you, Markowitz? My name is Mauricio Brodsky.” He has a Spanish accent, Ed notices. “Tell me, how is it that they ensnared you and brought you here to the country? I arrived this morning. Already the silence is deafening. Already my migraines are flaring.”

“What’s that sound?” Ed asks. He can hear a tiny whine in the air—the soft, steady sound of a mosquito.

“This is my secret weapon.” Mauricio unclips what looks like a cigarette lighter from his pocket. “It makes the sound of the male mosquito—to repel the female, who bites. She is already pregnant and wants nothing to do with him, and thus she flies away to bite someone else. Just two triple-A batteries. I got it by mail order from the Germans. Where else?” He gestures upward with long fingers, and Ed marvels at the way this man’s accent combines with an unmistakably Yiddish kvetching lilt. He looks gray about the gills, like a New Yorker, and he wears charcoal slacks. His face is changeable, with sardonic eyes, hair and chin receding, a look of studious penetration, devil-may-care pessimism, a little mustache, a satiric gleam. “So how did they lure you here?” Mauricio asks.

“I was on my way back east anyway—”

“I heard they were short of Jews,” Mauricio says. “Did they give you a thousand? Two thousand? Listen, you don’t have to say anything. I’m in the business. I know. Catholic-Jewish is my specialty. It’s like the theatre business. Worse!”

Sweat soaks Ed’s shirt, and the summer air hangs heavy and wet against him. They get to the top of the hill, and he is almost overcome by the heat. When Mauricio opens the glass door to the college dining hall, the chilled air from inside covers them in a sickening rush. An eager, blue-eyed man emerges from a crowd of young students, nuns, monks in brown cassocks. “This is Rich Mather,” Mauricio tells Ed, “the Institute Director.”

“Ed! Wonderful to see you!” Mather looks Ed in the eye. “Come up to the front of the line.”

“Wait a second,” Ed says, grabbing a tray, but Mather hurries him past the plates of brownies and red Jell-O cubes, and the vats of mashed potatoes. Ed reaches for a plate of meat loaf, but the woman at the counter gives him a tray

wmHamilton

“Basically, I see myself coming aboard this team as a kind of Lloyd Bentsen figure.”

wrapped in layers of aluminum foil. “Your kosher meal,” she says. He takes it, almost ill with hunger. “Listen, Rich,” he says to Mather, “I’ve got a quick question on the time limits for the presentations. I’ve got two papers I could present—one that’s more theoretical, running about forty minutes, or I have one that’s more popular, on terrorism, tolerance, double standards.”

“Ed, Ed,” Mather says, “you don’t have to worry about any of that here. I think you’ll see pretty soon that we don’t care about formalities here.”

“No time limits?” Ed asks.

“Oh, no. No papers, either. We just want you to say what you want to say.”

“Well, I *did* say what I wanted to say. It’s in my paper!” Ed turns in alarm to Mauricio, who looks at him with his thin-lipped, sardonic smile.

THEY sit down in a private dining room with Bob Hemmings and the other conference participants. There are eight in all: five Christians and three Jews. The fourth Jew got stuck in Paris, Mather tells them. He’ll be arriving in the morning. Ed looks at the cafeteria trays piled high with potatoes and Irish stew, bowls of minestrone. He would like to go back to the line and explain that although he’s Jewish, he doesn’t keep strictly kosher outside the home—that he would gladly take some stew and potatoes. But Mather keeps talking. Ed peels away the foil layers on his tray. He pulls out a bagel-dog.

“Well,” says Rich Mather, “I think it’s time for me to open up this dialogue. Some of you have asked me about presentations and conference sessions. I’d like to reëmphasize that our goal here is to depart from the academic-conference style as much as possible. Our Institute is a very unique place, not only bridging the gap between Christians and Jews but also between academics and clergy. Time, rules, and public speaking are not a concern here. Our tradition is not structured or formal but, rather, informal to the highest degree. And what we require—the only thing we require—is that all of you speak from the heart, talk with total honesty and sincerity, express the beliefs you hold deepest within you—”

Oh, is that all, Ed thinks, holding his bagel-dog, and he feels a sudden panic. He feels he is falling—had he ever really read the conference brochure?—as in a dream, his prepared paper snatched away, ripped from his flailing hands, and this rhetoric sways below him in roiling mud bubbles.

“What we do here is speak in the first person,” Mather says. “We talk about our common subject by talking about ourselves. After all, there is no better way to talk about interfaith relations than to talk about inner faith. That’s what we’ve found at each of these gatherings over the years. What is the study of religion but the study of life itself? The study of ourselves?”

Ed thinks he is going to puke. He swallows and looks across the table. Brother Matthew is still beaming as he puts away his mashed potatoes. Next to him a pale woman, blue-eyed and fair-haired, pores over a pocket Langenscheidt dictionary.

“So I guess what I’m saying is that we all come to this conference as—as—”

“Pilgrims,” a woman on Ed’s left fills in with assurance.

“Yes! Except that we don’t really know where we’re going or how to get there. But I think it’s that process of searching that’s really the key. We’re go-

LITHUANIA, AFTER FIFTY-TWO YEARS

THE MANOR

There is no house, only the park, though the oldest trees have been cut down.
And a thicket overgrows the traces of former alleys.
The granary has been dismantled, white, castlelike,
With cellars where the shelves harbored winter apples.
The same ruts as long ago on the sloping road:
I remembered where to turn but did not recognize the river.
Its color like that of reddish automobile oil,
No rushes and no lily pads.
The linden alley, dear to the bees, is gone,
And the orchards, a realm of wasps and hornets drunk with sweetness,
Are gone, crumbled into thistles and nettles.
This place and I, though far away,
Simultaneously, year after year, were losing leaves,
Were covered with snow, were waning.
And again we are together in our common old age.

My interest turns to the smoke from a metal pipe instead of a chimney
Above a cabin haphazardly patched up with boards and bricks
In the green of weeds and bushes—I recognize *Sambucus nigra.*

Blessed be life, for lasting, poorly, anyhow.
They were eating their noodles and potatoes
And at least had the use of all the old gardens
To cut wood for burning in our long winters.

A CERTAIN NEIGHBORHOOD

I told nobody I was familiar with that neighborhood.
Why should I? As if a hunter with a spear
Materialized, looking for something he once knew.
After many incarnations we return to the earth,
Uncertain we would recognize its face.
Where there were villages and orchards, now nothing, fields.
Instead of old timber, young groves.
The level of the waters is lower, the swamp disappeared
Together with the scent of ledum, the black grouse, and adders.

A little river should be here. Yes, but hidden in the brush,
Not, as before, amid meadows. And the two ponds
Must have covered themselves with duckweed
Before they sank into black loam.
The glitter of a small lake, but its shores are without rushes
Through which we struggled forward, swimming,
To dry ourselves afterward, I and Miss X, with one towel, dancing.

CITY OF MY YOUTH

It would be more decorous not to live. To live is not decorous,
Says he who after many years
Returned to the city of his youth. There was no one left
Of those who once walked these streets.
And now they had nothing, except his eyes.
Stumbling, he walked and looked, instead of them,
On the light they had loved, on the lilacs again in bloom.
His legs were, after all, more perfect
Than nonexistent legs. His lungs breathed in air
As is usual with the living. His heart was beating,
Surprising him with its beating, in his body
Their blood flowed, his arteries fed them with oxygen.
He felt, inside, their livers, spleens, intestines.
Masculinity and femininity, elapsed, met in him,
And every shame, every grief, every love.
If ever we accede to enlightenment,
He thought, it is in one compassionate moment
When what separated them from me vanishes
And a shower of drops from a bunch of lilacs
Pours on my face, and hers, and his, at the same time.

A MEADOW

It was a riverside meadow, lush, from before the hay harvest,
On an immaculate day in the sun of June.
I searched for it, found it, recognized it.
Grasses and flowers grew there, familiar in my childhood.
With half-closed eyelids I absorbed luminescence.
And the scent garnered me, all knowing ceased.
Suddenly I felt I was disappearing and weeping with joy.

—CZESLAW MILOSZ

(*Translated, from the Polish, by the author and Robert Hass.*)

ing to follow an old tradition at the Ecumenical Institute—one of personal narrative. I'll just go ahead and begin, and any one of you can jump in when you're ready."

"Hold it," says Ed. "I want to understand what we're doing here. So basically we're going to spend these sessions telling about ourselves? You want us to sit here and tell the story of our lives?"

"Only as a starting point," Mather answers. "It's not the whole story we're after. Just the turning points, the epiphanies. And, naturally, we'd like to focus on the religious dimension. Your relationships on a spiritual level—with God, with Scripture. To begin—"

"Rich," Brother Matthew interrupts, "just let me distribute these." He hands out a red St. Peter's College notebook to each of them. "Gifts from the college," he says.

"Oh, and I also brought a little something," announces a white-bearded man with a big yarmulke. He passes around some little plastic tubes in folded papers. "Lip salve," he says. "One of my congregants has devised this new formula here, and he's starting out in business with it. Those little papers have his address in North Carolina for you to order. I think you'll like it. I often use it myself." He smacks his lips. "Especially in the summer," he adds.

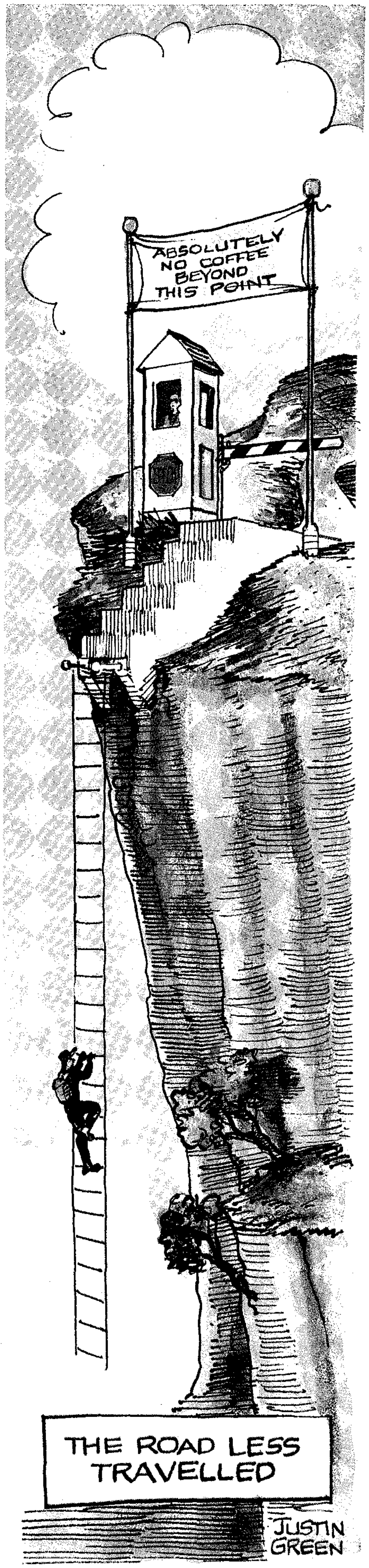
"Thank you, Rabbi," Mather says. "Rabbi Lehrer comes to us from Chapel Hill, where he holds a chair in medieval history." Ed stares at the wiry little rabbi. A chair! What kind of chair could it be? Or is the man some kind of brilliant eccentric? Ed has never heard of him.

"I grew up in Cambridge, Mass.," Mather tells the group, "in the shadows of all those Mathers. They sort of dominated the landscape for me, like the red brick . . ."

Ed glances around the room. He is amazed to see all the others taking notes. He looks over at Bob Hemmings' notebook. "St. Peter's College," Bob has written. "We are all pilgrims. In religion, ourselves." Ed opens his own notebook. He stares at the blank page, then rips it out and writes a note to Mauricio. "What the hell *is* this?"

Mather hums on pleasantly like a lawnmower in the distance. "And I'd got to the point, by the time I lived in Eliot House, where I'd always won these academic awards, continually won these prizes—and I didn't know enough to let it scare me; I assumed I deserved everything that came to me. Until the day I found out I hadn't won that Rhodes Scholarship—that I hadn't been chosen. I see that as a turning point for me, because it opened my eyes to a new experience. I mean, I was experiencing failure—which, of course, was so much more important than all the successes I'd had before. I remember I woke up in the middle of the night and began walking along the Charles. I felt absolutely at peace and in love with this new, bittersweet taste—failure. I felt a humility before the world and before God. I felt that I was in fact *not* a chosen one, not set apart, created to excel. I was created only to live! Of course, at that stage of my life this heightened understanding couldn't last—"

Mauricio hands back Ed's note. His answer is in pale ballpoint, his letters elongated and aristocratic under Ed's black scrawl. "What is this, you ask? A conference in the old sense, no? A *parlement*? A convocation? A Decameron? No—it's a Canterbury Tales, or, rather, Parliament of Fowls. A medieval


ABSOLUTELY NO COFFEE BEYOND THIS POINT
THE ROAD LESS TRAVELLED
JUSTIN GREEN

amphigory. Believe me, this is what ecumenicism comes to. New York burns and the Klan is marching. We are sequestering ourselves. We are retiring to the country. Mather begins the Book of the Unitarian Courtier. What do you want me to say? It gives me migraines—still, I love my work."

"My marriage was breaking up, and I had to confront that," Mather is telling them, "along with the other issues I had been harboring—my guilt, my alcoholism—and in that process I found that the Church held less for me. Spiritually, where I found myself was in my network of friends and my support groups. Then, slowly, I found that as one vessel emptied out, another filled—that my supports in terms of people and my therapy process came, for me, to be a church. I think it's happened this way for a whole generation coming to terms with dependency—"

"Excuse me," says the woman with the precise voice.

"Yes, Sister Elaine."

"I think you have to be careful about speaking for a whole generation. I, for one, am not dependent. I am a *sinner*"—she divides the air swiftly with her hands—"but I am not dependent. I'm sorry, I interrupted you."

"No, go on, go on," Mather urges, leaning forward in his chair. "Please, jump in. I was just getting the ball rolling, but I want to hear from all of you."

"No, you aren't done," Sister Elaine demurs.

"No, please."

Ed watches Sister Elaine as she gives in, unwillingly. She is a thin woman with delicate features and short, wavy hair. Her skirt and short-sleeved top are brown and strangely autumnal. She drapes a cardigan over her shoulders. "I grew up in a functional family," she begins, "and remained close to my parents and my brother after I left home. I was still a very young girl when I lived in the mother house. I had my training there—the discipline. It was there I had the most important experience of my life. Two years after that—"

"Tell us about the experience," Mather says.

"Oh, no," Sister Elaine tells him.

"No, really, please, this is exactly—"

"Oh, no, I couldn't possibly tell you about it," Sister Elaine says. "It wouldn't be of general interest, though it was the most important experience of *my* life. And, of course, it's private. Paradoxically, in the mother house, where we lived in such close proximity, sharing rooms, schedules, and meals, we all managed to observe a strict degree of privacy. There would be a room for silence, for example, and when you entered it—left the corridor where everyone was bubbling over—you would find perfect quiet, almost as if you were alone. I taught in the primary schools until one day I was called by the diocese to get my Ph.D. in Scriptures of the First Testament. Now, of course, I'm an assistant professor, subject to all the strains and pressures—the ruthlessness. I specialize in prophets from a form-critical approach, and I serve in the Washington, D.C., Jewish-Christian dialogue, on the Catholic Committee."

"Go on," Mather says.

"That's it," Sister Elaine tells him. "What else do you want to know?"

"Uh, well, I know you are a feminist, for one thing, and I was wondering about your feelings, as a feminist, living within the hierarchy of the Church."

"Well, I am a feminist," Sister Elaine says, "but I am not a revisionist. I won't change the liturgy."

"That's what I was wondering—I mean, why you won't," Mather says.

"Because I won't tear my heart out!" This startles everyone around the table, and one very old man wakes up suddenly and shakes himself.

"Well," he says, when he finds the others looking at him, "I believe I am the senior member of the group—"

"Just a second, Brother Marcus," Mather interrupts apologetically. "I don't think Sister Elaine was finished."

"Oh, I beg your pardon," the old man says, and he settles down again into his white beard.

"Yes, I was finished—absolutely," Sister Elaine tells Mather sternly.

"Well, you just tell me when you want me to start," Brother Marcus says in a deep, Southern voice. "Give me a holler, so I can hear, because you are dealing with a very old monk here."

"You go right ahead," Sister Elaine tells him.

Ed feels a nudge at his side. It's Mauricio. "You see," he whispers in his breathy Spanish accent, "first the nun's tale, and now the nun's priest's." He quirks his eyebrow at Ed.

"Yeah, right," Ed says, not really sure what Mauricio is getting at, feeling exhausted, duped, self-deceived. It was his own greed, after all, that drew him here. The check from the Ecumenical Institute. It's agonizing sitting here like this, forced into this kind of voyeurism.

Brother Marcus just looks out at all of them, his beard startlingly white, his eyes the intense blue of the very young and the very old. "I believe I am the senior member of the group," he says again. "I am eighty-four years old. My name is Brother Marcus Goldwater, and I think I've been invited because of my life experience, ecumenically speaking. I was raised in Chattanooga, Tennessee, in a family of Reformed Jewish background. We went every year to the Temple on the High Holy Days, and there was a dinner every year on Passover. Also, we children belonged to a Jewish social club, where we went to dances and singing parties. At the age of eighteen I got a job at the Sears and Roebuck Company and I stayed with the company nine years, where I fell under the influence of my immediate supervisor, who set out to court me into Catholicism."

"What do you mean, 'court you'?" Ed asks, shocked. He has never heard anything like this in his life. He's stunned to come up against such a figure—the voice, those eyes, that bright-white beard.

"By courting I mean that he never pretended he was doing anything different," Goldwater explains, more deliberately than ever, "and yet he never forced me farther than I wanted to go. He courted me the way a man courts a young girl. He never made any pretenses, though. He told me that he had converted five and he hoped I would be his sixth. It happened gradually. He used my natural curiosity, like this—'I'm going to a beautiful concert,' he said to me. 'I want to take you along, but you wouldn't understand it.' Well, that piqued me, of course. I insisted he take me. The concert was a holy Mass. I sank down on my knees, and I could understand."

"You are saying," Mauricio says dryly, "that this man seduced you into Catholicism."

"Oh, yes," says Goldwater, "he seduced me very deliberately. Yes, indeed. But I think that's what a conversion is. I surrendered myself up, body and soul. I fell in love with the Church. Yielded away. My supervisor at the Sears and Roebuck Company was not interested in an easy infatuation or a quick conversion. He insisted I take instruction, which I did for several years, and later, when I decided I wanted to take orders, he questioned me severely." Brother Marcus looks down at his hands, and Ed notices his ring for the first time; it's large and silver, a Gothic cross that reaches almost to the first knuckle—it's a little tarnished, so it looks at first like wrought iron. "So I was his sixth," Marcus says. "But this I remember him telling me, and I have always been grateful for it. He said, 'Never forget your roots. Never forget you were born a Jew.' And I have not. Some of you here will surely think I am an apostate, but I am not. I'm just the opposite, because I have preserved my identity. And I have *never* given up my Jewish name, Marcus Goldwater."

"Oh dear, oh my!" gasps old Rabbi Lehrer. He is convulsed with laughter, and no one can believe it. He sounds absolutely pixillated. "I had this one from a congregant of mine in North Carolina," he wheezes, eyes streaming. "There was a man—a Jewish man—and somehow his name got onto the solicitation list for the Republican Party. The girl calls him up and says, 'Mr. Goldwasser, may I put you down for a contribution?' Says the man, 'My name is Goldwater. Goldwater, not Goldwasser. My father's name is Goldwater, my grandfather, *olev hasholem*, his name was Goldwater, too!'

"But on one subject I must seriously disagree with you, Brother Mark," the rabbi says, wiping the tears from his eyes. "You are not the senior member of the party, because I am eighty-*five*. And, God willing, in November I'll be eighty-six! I was born in a little town that would now be in Romania if it had survived the First War and if what was left had been spared by the Nazis later on. This is history! One 'if' after another. But I had a beautiful, religious childhood, thanks to my parents, of blessed memory. My father had a sawmill and kept us prosperous and well. Always he instilled in us a love of education, and he kept a library in the house, where he himself would read and meditate. He was prominent in the synagogue and in the town. His greatest joy was to give to the poor and provide for them. But it was my dear mother who instilled in me my spiritual sense from the time I was a child, and I remember that once—it is one of my earliest memories—she was standing in the golden light of the window in late afternoon with a book before her. 'Mama, Mama,' I asked her, as small children do, 'why are you standing there with that book?'

" 'Because I am praying,' she answered me. 'Praying to the creator who made the world.' Small as I was, this impressed me deeply, and from that moment I also wanted to dedicate myself to God, the creator of this beautiful world."

Ed squirms. He closes his eyes and sees pictures. Embarrassing pictures. The kind that hang in the social hall of his temple in D.C. Fake Chagalls of the old country. A woman standing at the window, a babushka on her head. A pair of klutzy candlesticks. Does Lehrer expect them to believe he grew up in one of those pictures? It makes Ed sick, because he does believe it. He sees Lehrer in all those garish colors, that village with roofs tilted upward and rabbis with upturned eyes and frail, Hasidic faces and Lehrer's mother floating at the window. He sees it all, and it is maddening, the way Lehrer triggers these clichés. Affirming that he, Ed, has roots in bad lithographs and the pictures on mortuary calendars; that he, Ed, originally comes from a Judaica shop, and that his cultural memory is bound in coffee-table books.

"My parents," Lehrer continues, as Brother Marcus nods off again, "had dearly hoped I would become a rabbi when they saw my love of learning in the little school my brothers and I attended. In any case, it seemed ordained that I should be a rabbi. Our last name was Lehrer, which means teacher, and my parents had given me the name Menachem, which means comforter. In fact, I was named after my sainted grandfather on the maternal side, who was directly descended from the famous Vilna Gaon, one of the greatest teachers and scholars who ever lived. Well, I grew into something of a *talmid chachem* myself. What can I say? It was not my intelligence but my love of the subject that spurred me on. I loved God's word—this was my gift."

Ed shifts in his chair. His right foot has fallen asleep. He writes a note to Mauricio: "I don't think I can take this much longer."

"How fortunate that we emigrated to Toronto when we did, in 1915!" Rabbi Lehrer exclaims. "I was only a small boy, but truly my life has been full of blessings. We settled in Canada, and, as before, my father prospered, this time in the retail business. My older brothers soon joined him in the company. Then it was my turn to choose a career. I remember the day clearly. My parents sat down with me, and they said, 'Menachem, you are old enough to decide on your profession.'

" 'Father, Mother,' I said, 'my dearest wish is to become a rabbi and devote my life to learning.' Well, they smiled, because this was exactly what they had hoped for all through my childhood."

Mauricio is signalling to Rich Mather, tapping his watch. He passes a note to Ed in his pale, spiky handwriting. "Stand it, you say? What else do we do in this world but talk about ourselves?"

"And so it happened that when my dear wife and I moved to Vancouver, where I took on the fledgling congregation—well, there another blessing befell me. By some chance my phone number was only one digit different from that in the immigration office, and, purely by mistake, some officials called me—officials deciding the cases of some of the Jews fleeing Hitler. Well, whenever they asked for my services I was more than happy to oblige them as an interpreter or whatever else was needed, and in this small way I helped several Jewish families seeking asylum. For this—only for this in my life—I can say I am truly *proud.*"

"Rabbi," Mather says, hesitantly, "I sense some of the people in the room are feeling tired after their flights."

"Maybe we should end this session," Ed cuts in.

"But I'm only up to 1932!" Rabbi Lehrer says, dismayed. "I haven't even gotten to the war years and my congregations in Winnipeg and North Carolina, or my monograph—"

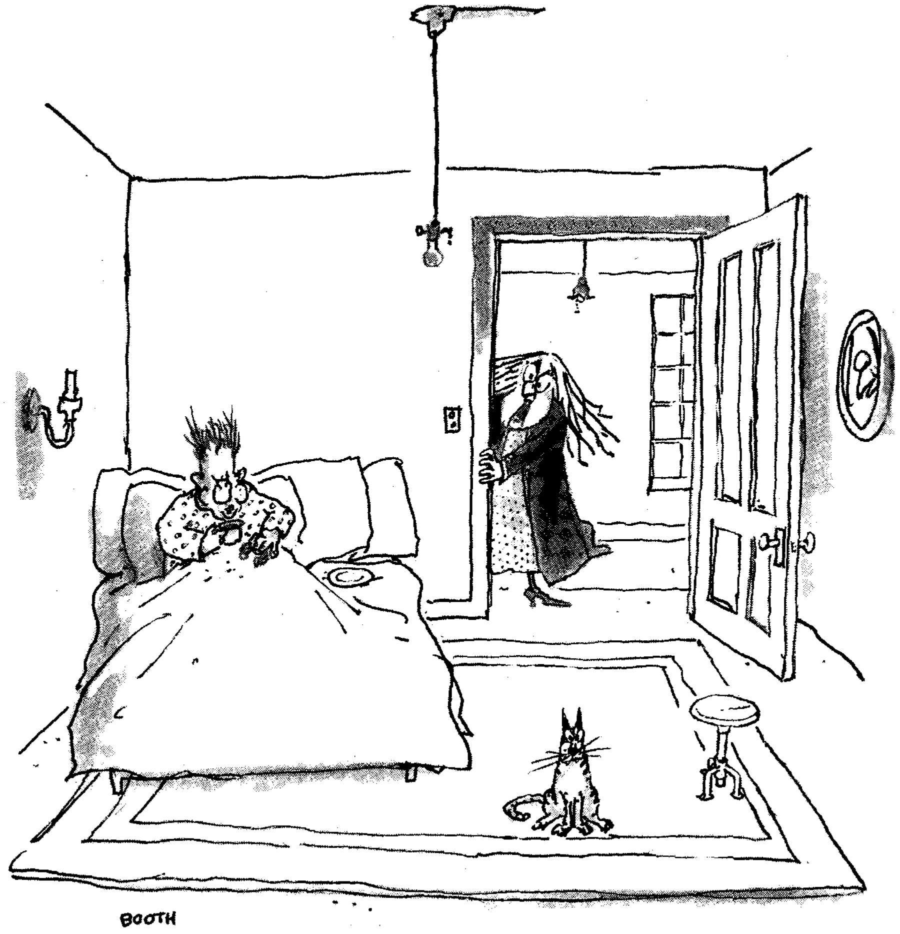
"It *is* getting late," says Sister Elaine. The others start to gather their things or even stand up. Brother Marcus wakes and looks around him.

"I suppose I have more to tell, having lived so long," Lehrer says.

"You should write your memoirs, Rabbi," Bob Hemmings tells him.

"I have two hundred pages," Lehrer says.

It is ten o'clock when they walk down the hill to the Institute's sod houses. The sun is setting, and heavy clouds move rapidly across the sky. An instant later the sky blackens, and it begins to pour. Steam hisses up from the black asphalt road. "Christ," Ed groans. His glasses are steaming up, and water pours down his face.



"It's time to split the Hosta funkia!"

"This is one of our storms," Brother Matthew tells the group, in exactly the tone that he identified Bob Hemmings as "our Presbyterian." Sister Elaine is the only one with an umbrella. She insists on giving it to Rabbi Lehrer and Brother Marcus.

"Coming from where I do—Chattanooga," Marcus says, "I couldn't possibly accept a lady's only umbrella."

"Nor could I, nor could I," the rabbi tells her.

"But you are the senior members," Elaine reminds them, and she holds it over their heads.

Ed stamps into his sod house, shoes squelching, stomach churning. After he has dried off, he waits in the living room until Bob says, "Well, time to turn in. Pleasant dreams!" Then Ed seizes the phone. It's late in D.C. He doesn't want to wake his wife, but this is an emergency.

The phone rings three times on the other end. Sarah picks up. "Hello, what is it now, Rose?" she asks.

"Sarah, this is Ed."

"Oh," Sarah says, "I thought it was your mother. She's been calling from L.A. about her lawsuit."

"What?"

"She's suing Primo Cleaners—remember?"

"Oh. Listen, Sarah, I don't want to hear about that."

"Why not? She's your mother," Sarah says, "and I'm the one stuck here manning the phones. I'm at the end of my rope. She's met a retired judge at the Center and they're working on the case full time. She's been calling me every night! Two, three times a night. I would have disconnected the phone if the kids hadn't been on that canoe trip. I was afraid in an emergency they wouldn't be able to reach me. Of course, she's having a wonderful time."

"Who?"

"Rose. She's getting more mileage out of that bedspread. It was polished cotton, and they laundered it and ruined the finish. Of course, she doesn't want a new one."

"Sarah, I don't care about that bedspread," Ed tells her.

"Play 'Misty' for me."

• •

"Neither do I!" she thunders.

"Don't you scream at me. I didn't call to be screamed at."

"Fine."

"Sarah?"

"What?"

"Are you there?"

"Yes."

"How are you?"

"I just told you how I was," she says.

"Look, Sarah, I've had a miserable day. I've been through hell."

"What's wrong?"

"What's wrong? I'm in some godforsaken hole in the ground. Literally! It's a hundred degrees when it isn't pouring rain, with a bunch of clergymen"—he lowers his voice, eying Hemmings' closed bedroom door—"with no academic qualifications whatsoever, at a conference which is being run like some cross between Stanislavsky and A. A."

"What have you been doing?"

"I have been listening to the participants talk about themselves. We're supposed to talk about ourselves."

"What do you do the rest of the time?"

"Anything. No structure. No schedule."

"It sounds nice," Sarah says. "It sounds relaxing. Why don't you relax and enjoy it?"

"No, no, you don't understand, Sarah. You don't understand what these sessions are like. There's some kind of senile rabbi here who just—"

"Is there a lake?" she asks.

"What? Yeah."

"Go for a swim. I rolled up your swim trunks with your underwear."

"I don't want to go swimming," Ed hisses. "I want to go *home* and get some—"

"You think I'm going to fall for that after sending four kids to Camp Ramah?"

"When I think of the referee reports on my desk. And the unanswered mail—the paper I promised Frankel! My time and energy—"

"Oh, Ed," Sarah says, "it's two more days. One and a half."

"I don't think you're catching on to what I'm saying. These people are making me physically ill! The bullshit here goes right up to the sky!"

"What's that from—'Oklahoma!'?" She giggles.

"And my roommate," he whispers, "is a small-town preacher out of Norman Rockwell. Just now he wished me pleasant dreams!"

"So what, Ed! What's wrong with that?"

"He doesn't even know me!"

"It's a good thing. Ed, I happen to have a meeting at the university tomorrow morning."

"Sarah?"

"What."

"I'm just exhausted."

"So am I," she says.

"You have no idea."

"Pleasant dreams," she tells him.

Ed finds a glass in the living-room cupboard and fumbles in his toiletries case for his Alka-Seltzer. Glumly, he drinks the fizzing mixture in the bathroom; he eyes himself in the mirror. His thinning hair is windblown, his eyes stare out, wild and confused—the remnant of a younger body. "I'm too old for this," he mutters, as he eases into bed. His ears ring with other voices. The Spanish Yiddish of Mauricio Brodsky, and Bob Hemmings' "Sure thing!" clanging in the air, Rich Mather's even tones, Rabbi Lehrer's tale of good fortune. Ed pushes his pillows to his ears.

AT six in the morning, Ed wakes to the noise of cars or trucks on the college road. He jumps out of bed, ravenous, and finds Bob in the living room, writing in his notebook. "Good morning!" Bob greets him. "How did you sleep?"

"O.K.," Ed growls, incapable of cheer at this hour. "What's that noise? Garbage trucks?"

"Tour buses," Bob tells him. "The British Special Olympics team is dorming at the college. I was just up there, looking around. They've got maybe six, eight buses from Minneapolis. It's something to see."

"What about breakfast?" Ed asks.

"I'll just wash up and we can walk over together," Bob says.

While he is waiting, Ed glances at Bob's open notebook. He sees that Bob has written his entire personal statement out in longhand. "I preach at First Presbyterian in Syracuse. Of course, we Presbyterians have a thing about being first. Just about all our churches are called First Presbyterian."

"Ready to go?" Bob asks, as he emerges from the bathroom.

Red banners festoon the dining

hall—"Welcome, Special Olympians, England, Scotland, and Wales"—and the workers dish out scrambled eggs and hash browns, sausages and French toast. "I guess you'll want the kosher meal," says Bob.

"What did you do here in the winter?" Ed asks Bob at the table.

"Well, I studied, I meditated, I decompressed," Bob says. "You get burnt out in a job like mine. There's creative burnout, where you feel like you can't write another homily. Then there's the emotional toll—"

"Hmm." Ed stares into his cereal bowl.

"Troubled, troubled people," Bob says. "Just before I came here I was counselling a man whose life has really fallen apart, split wide open. He'd married late, and he and his wife had built their dream house. It took them five years. Beautiful place in the mountains. Custom furniture, folk art, antique-toy collection—unbelievable stuff. Then they prepared to have a child and lost the baby in the womb at nine months. They came in for counselling, but by that time the marriage was falling apart. The wife pulled away. I think they'll have a divorce. We had a ceremony for the child, a kind of funeral—and now the house is up for sale. The husband has been coming to me alone now, studying his Bible, trying to understand."

"What's to understand?" Ed asks. "It's the American way. First the dream house, then the toys, then death, then religion. It's so goddam American."

Bob laughs and shakes his head. "It's true," he says. "Ed, that's very well put. Still, the pain is real. The questions are real." Bob's voice drifts off. Then he douses his French toast with more syrup. "You want to try out the lake?"

The lake is full of Special Olympians, swimming and splashing, diving off the dock into the cold green water. Bob jumps in and starts swimming efficiently, stretching out his long body. Ed looks around warily. There must be thousands of mosquitoes in the long, wet grass. Just thinking about it makes him itch. Millions of them breeding in the still water under the dock. He eases himself into the water and paddles around, cold currents seizing his legs. Then he turns back and clings to the mossy dock for support, despite the kids dive-bombing overhead. A small child wriggles by, swimming like a minnow underwater. Suddenly a little girl looks up into his face. Treading water, she stares at him. "Hello," Ed says, "what sport do you play?"

"Gymnastics," she says, and continues treading water, staring into his eyes.

"And what's your name?" Ed asks.

"Alison."

"Where are you from, Alison?"

"The green house at Burnham where the road takes the cliffs down by the sea," she recites for him. Then she pushes off again.

"Good luck," Ed calls after her. He feels cold in the lake, and helpless, with all this splashing life around him. All these people, with such histories attached to them—these cosmological systems instead of homes, ancestral totems instead of parents, vocations instead of professions, paradigm shifts instead of childhoods. He'd never developed that kind of mythology about himself—or, rather, he would never discuss it in public! He feels all out of kilter. Since he arrived, he hasn't been able to hear himself think. Clambering onto the dock, he resolves to take his briefcase and get some work done in the college library.

The library looks like a cathedral. Desks line up against a railing high up on a balcony. It's like sitting in a choir loft. Ed peers down at the stacks below. How can he get out of this mess? He could try to call the shuttle service and change his ticket with the airline. He could hide out in his sod house for the afternoon session.

"Dr. Markowitz?" someone whispers behind him. It is a young monk in a brown cassock and rope belt. "Pat Flanagan. Remember me? The shuttle bus."

"Oh!" Ed stares at the young man. He had forgotten about him—the new professor. "I thought you were coming out here to teach," he says.

"Oh, yes," Flanagan says. "But also to join the monastery. How do you like it here?"

"It's very nice," Ed says. "It's fine. I thought you said it was quiet."

"I guess it's not as quiet at this time of year," Flanagan says. "They rent out the facilities in the summer, and right now, in particular, we've got the Special Olympics, and a basketball camp, and the Elderhostel groups—I guess you've seen them."

"No."

"Well, you can't miss them—they all wear matching T-shirts. But in winter it's really peaceful. If you like to walk in the snow, it's the best place in the world."

"Yeah, I heard," Ed says.

He slips into the dining hall as soon as it opens for lunch. Then, stealthily, after checking to make sure that none of the conference people are around, he takes a tray and loads up with fried chicken, mashed potatoes, peas, and apple pie. He slips into a seat near the wall, where a long table of Elderhostel students camouflage him. Then he devours that chicken and potato. He goes back for seconds. He eats like a man rescued from captivity.

"Now, Margaret," says the woman next to him. "I told you before—this weekend we're having a wienie roast."

"Oh, yes, oh, yes, I remember now—and I want to bring something," Margaret replies.

"But you don't have to bring anything."

"But I really want to."

"Well, now, we always have more than enough food at our wienie roasts. I can't think of anything."

"How about potato salad?" Margaret asks.

"Well, I don't know."

"You don't like potato salad?"

"No, I love it."

"Oh, you don't have to fib to me, Eileen."

"No, no, I love it," Eileen says. "It's just that I don't think we ever have potato salad."

"Oh," Margaret sounds surprised. "We always have potato salad with our wienies. See, I don't eat my wienie on a bun. I like to cut mine up on the plate, with the potato salad sort of surrounding it."

"Eduardo!" Mauricio Brodsky cries out before the afternoon session begins.

"Well, you're happy today," Ed says.

"I was at the bookstore, and I loaded up! Catholic theology. An outstanding collection. I spent three hundred dollars—for my research, my detective work. Where were you this morning? You missed Mass."

"I'm Jewish," Ed says, looking at Mauricio with his thin Latin mustache and black yarmulke.

"It's true, and that's why it is imperative, vital, that you go and you understand! I always go, whenever I am near a cathedral, to immerse myself in the sounds and the sights. Of course, it means nothing to me, nothing!" he confides, flicking his long fingers. "But one should go. As a Jew, one *must* go. To—to—"

"Experience it," Ed finishes.

"No, no, so they can experience you. But let me tell you, the true joy, the joy of my life, is to bring my Catholic clergy to my own Young Israel—to sit with them in the congregation. It is a beautiful thing to sit down with them, to antagonize the rabbi."

"Hello, Professor Markowitz, Dr. Brodsky," says Brother Matthew. Beads of perspiration stand on his massive forehead. "Are you enjoying yourselves? Do you like your rooms?"

"Brother Matthew, it is all beautiful, excellent," Mauricio says.

"Good, good," says Matthew. "You know, we have a tradition here at St. Peter's. When you come here as a guest you become part of the family—and that means you can come anytime and stay with us."

"Beautiful," Mauricio says. "Excellent. So, Brother Matthew, when are you going to tell your tale?"

"What—me?" Matthew laughs. "I'm not in the conference, you know. I'm just a liaison. I just come down to listen to all of you."

"Oh, I think you must tell us your tale," Mauricio says.

"There is nothing to tell," Matthew says. "I entered the monastery when I was sixteen, and what with one thing and another, I never left. Of course, I was over at the Vatican for a couple of years. And I lived eleven years in Alaska with the Inuit."

"Well, that's something!" Mauricio says.

"Oh, I don't know. Life wasn't much different in Alaska," says Brother Matthew. "The rule is the same, wherever you go."

"So . . ." Ed hesitates. "You joined up when you were sixteen."

"I started on the path. I guess otherwise I would have become an auto mechanic like my brothers. I do the monastery auto repairs in any case."

Ed stares at the monk and thinks that he really does look like an auto mechanic. This makes him want to ask Matthew what he thinks of all this nonsense at the conference—Marcus, the Southern Jew converted to Catholicism, Sister Elaine and her mother house. He wants to ask, confidentially, whether it gives Matthew the willies. But Rich Mather is talking already.

"Let me introduce a newcomer, Avner Rabinovitch, our Israeli from the University of Haifa," he says. "His flight was delayed twelve hours in Paris, so he just got in this morning. He's a newcomer to the conference, but an old-timer here at the Institute—a key member of our Third World Scriptural Caucus."

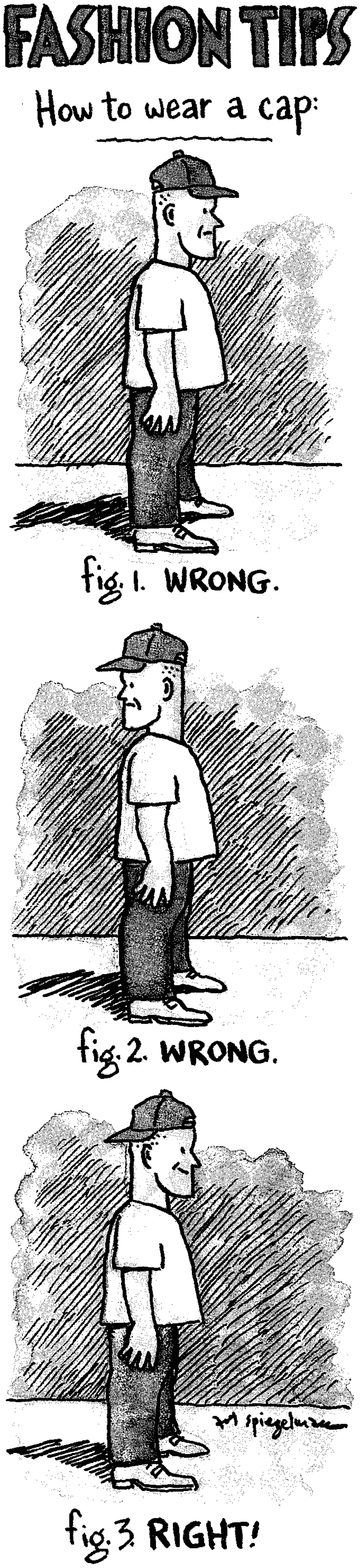
Ed perks up. He himself has a certain interest in the Third World, specifically fringe terrorist groups. He looks with hope at Rabinovitch, an actual scholar whose area of expertise connects to Ed's own field.

"I don't know about you," Mather is telling them. "But I've already got a pile of notes." He looks around the private dining room, where they sit exactly as they had the night before—Ed between Mauricio and Bob Hemmings, opposite them Sister Elaine and Rabbi Lehrer. "Marthe, would you like to—" Mather turns toward the woman sitting on the other side of Mauricio, the Langenscheidt dictionary on the table. She is extremely fair, with the beginning of a bad sunburn.

"You must pardon me for my English," Marthe says, looking up at them with pale-blue eyes. "Also, I must tell you that it was my husband originally to come here to this meeting, but he could not at the end and sent me, his wife, to represent him in his place. So, I must speak not only for myself but for him also, my husband, who is a true theologian—I, only his assistant and a graduate student."

Mauricio leans over and says to Ed, "Now, this is the wife's tale, no?"

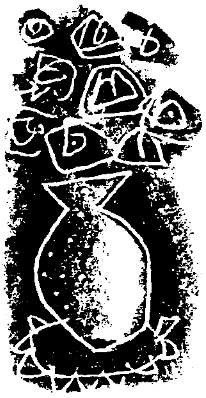
"I must also say," Marthe continues, "I do not take it for granted—I who am a Christian, and a German one—what it is to sit down with you who are Jews. This


FASHION TIPS
How to wear a cap:
fig. 1. WRONG.
fig. 2. WRONG.
fig. 3. RIGHT!
M Spiegelman

is a privilege for me, and my husband says, as well, it is a lesson to us who have residing on us the guilt of our history. So I must deeply thank you.

"I grew up in Düsseldorf in a Protestant family, not religious but secular-cultural—devoted to books, arts, and music. On weekdays my father played on the piano Mozart, Handel, Schumann, and Brahms. On Sundays he played the works of Johann Sebastian Bach. I grew and married. Then, with Peter, my education began. Peter was searching in his religion. Now we married; we searched together. We were looking for answers to our history. How the Church had stood close by in the terrible events of Hitler. Peter wrote a book about the Protestant Church and the Nazis. Together we discovered the guilt of our religious people, and now, Peter believed, the guilt in our religion itself. Even the good scholars who refused to ally with the coöperating Church—these brought into their own theology a coöperation with anti-Semitism. It was the tenets of the religion which contained the sin, Peter decided, and I, who researched, must agree with him in this. The root of the Church we found corrupt, based on violence—namely, the violent seizure of the Hebrew Scripture by a latter culture. Peter asked me, What have the Christian interpreters to do with Jesus' own view of the Scripture? For Jesus read the text as a Jew. Yet it was seized and made over for new uses. Peter's book led him to despair the Church, passive in the evil time of this century. We thought together, How to reply to this history? How must we raise our two children? To the question of evil in the world, we know there is no answer. To the question of the Church, we did not know. Then Peter found an idea in himself. He said to me, This church failed us, but with us it may be changed. We must use theology to understand, and we must employ our historical scholarship to reform. In our own Lutheran tradition of Reformation, we may strip away the rotten and make new. This is my husband's idea in life, and for me, too, although I have returned only recently to university now that my children are growing. The Hebrew is for me difficult, but I study and grow to it so I and Peter may continue. We must continue. However, we have no escape from our terrible guilt—" Marthe's voice breaks; her eyes fill with tears. Mauricio reaches out and clasps her hands, and Ed sees that Mauricio is also crying. The two of them sit there together, clasping hands. "We must always ask pardon," Marthe weeps.

"We must give it," Mauricio says.



No one else speaks. Finally, Rich Mather says, "Well, I can feel the energy in the room. Marthe, it was a beautiful statement. Really. Maybe—Mauricio?"

Mauricio begins to talk, seriously, quickly. Of course, Ed thinks, Mauricio will offer no satirical comment on himself, no title for his own story. Ed looks down at his own open notebook, covered with spiralling doodles. He picks up his pen and writes: "The pardoner's tale."

"My parents raised me and my brother in Buenos Aires," says Mauricio. "The rest of my family died in the camps. They sent me to Catholic schools because they wanted me to be a lawyer, and there I learned not only the Christian but the Jewish Bible. On holy days I walked in streets scattered with leaflets, scattered like flowers, quotations from the gospels—' "Crucify him," said the Jews, "Crucify him!" ' Here was my second taste of anti-Semitism—here my resolve to fight the bigotry, both in Jews and in Christians. I became a rabbi, and I settled in New York City to work in the Jewish-Catholic Dialogue Foundation. There, I met my great love—Catholic theology and canon law. My academic delight! My apartment is filled with Catholic missals, tracts, Passion plays, but, above all, canon law. I write for all the religious presses. Last year, when my daughter was engaged, we were having a little party for our new in-laws. Very observant Jews, dressed in black, wearing black hats—who knew whether they would eat our food? My wife looked at me. 'Mauricio,' she said, 'your books! They're all over the apartment. They are in the dining room! What will these people say to us? Shouldn't we do something? Hang a curtain? Put up a screen?'

" 'Anna,' I said, 'This is what I am—how can I hide it? My life is here. Is this so terrible? Is this like a skeleton in the closet?'

"Naturally, with my own religion, I have nothing but aggravations. It is too close to me to enjoy. Every Shabbat I go to my little synagogue and I am disgusted with the way the service runs. What can I say? I love to complain. Mistakenly, I turn on a light on Shabbat. Do I worry that God is angry with me? Certainly not. So he is angry with me. So what? I am angry with God! He let my family die. For this I will never forgive him. Always I have this argument with God. I ask him, why did you fail us? Men may fail. How can you, ever? What is this study of evil? I agree with Marthe—there is no answer. What is this thing, theodicy? My family went to the ovens, and that's it—" He breaks off, breathless.

"This is so *true*," affirms Avner Rabinovitch. Ed's hope in the Israeli scholar dies. Rabinovitch is obviously not going to speak like a scholar but like one of *them*. He speaks hoarsely, with a heavy Israeli accent, a haunted look in his eyes—either from anguish, Ed thinks, or from his sleepless night at de Gaulle. "What could it be? What answer is there from a God like that? I myself argue with God, talk against him in the night. I work at the university, teach my classes. At home, I pace, with the holy book in my hand. What can commentaries mean? How can the commentators explain evil? They talk about words and letters in words. They ask—empty questions."

"Now, wait a minute," Rabbi Lehrer puts up a hand. "There are many discussions of evil in the commentaries, and among our great philosophers. I myself have found many answers. There is the work of—"

"Rabbi," Mauricio interrupts, "what kind of evil could you see in Canada? We should all be so lucky to live in Canada during the major catastrophes, the world wars."

"I think that's an ad-hominem argument," Lehrer fumes. "I was making a point about theodicy."

"Well, my point is this," Avner breaks in. "I had a son once. Now he is no more. How can I justify his death in Lebanon? Who can justify a thing like that? Can I find solace in the Scriptures? I read the sacrifice of Isaac and find there the death of my son. His death, over and over, in the letters of my book."

"Hold on," Bob Hemmings says, puzzled. "Isaac didn't die. He was saved."

"Yes!" says Avner, and his fleshy face

reddens with emotion, surprisingly young. “That is exactly the point. Isaac was saved. But my son was not rescued by any angel. He is gone, but I must live and teach, and argue why with God. And this is my work, to ask these questions, while my colleagues in religion debate—fine points. And this is what I am saying. The true scholar must consider the texts with his own experience. What can my colleagues gain, counting words? I take up the Scriptures in the dark night of my soul. I demand it—speak!”

“Get me out of here,” Ed whispers under his breath.

“What did you say, Ed?” Rich Mather asks. “Did you want to respond? Share your own statement?”

“No,” Ed says.

“But it’s your turn,” says Sister Elaine.

“I believe you’re the last one,” Brother Marcus points out.

“Pass,” Ed says. “I pass.”

“Oh, Ed,” Mather chides him. “I think we’ve built up enough trust—I think there’s enough warmth in this room—”

“O.K.,” Ed stems the flow of Mather’s assurances. “You want a statement from me? You want to know what I think? I think this is the most disorganized, disjointed conference I have ever seen, and as a professional, a historian, and an academic, I feel sick—*sick!*—listening to this. I have never seen anything like this. I have never seen navel-picking on this scale! Self-congratulation, self-flagellation! What are we doing here? This is surreal! What am I doing here listening—you should excuse the expression—to these *bubbe-mayses*? And what are these little scenes played out here, which are supposed to be so terribly moving, where Marthe begs forgiveness for crimes she did not commit and Mauricio pardons her for suffering he did not feel? That’s not moving. That’s sick. Since when were you appointed to speak for the Germans and the Jews? When did you assume the mantle? I’d love to know. And Avner, I’m sorry your son was killed. What kind of license does that give you to write off historical techniques and scholarly analysis? How can you possibly sit here and—”

“You have completely misunderstood what I was saying,” Avner breaks in. “I was making a critique of my profession, the scriptural discipline—the academics, like you—which looks only at minutiae.”

“I am a scholar!” Ed bellows. “That means every once in a while I stop picking my nose and focus on something outside myself and my own pain. I work on achieving some distance. I work on some objectivity. I take a decongestant for my ego! That’s what a discipline is!” he shouts. “It’s about discipline! You’re sitting here massaging each other with Cheez Whiz, and I’m sick of watching!”

The silence is different this time. Bigger, not solemn or full of energy. The only sound comes from Marthe, flipping frantically through the pages of her dictionary.

It is a terrible quiet, and no one is willing to break it. Rich Mather stares down at the table, something closed and tight about his face. “Well,” Mauricio says at last. “Suppose we take a break.”

“No,” Sister Elaine says. “If there is a problem here, we certainly shouldn’t run away from it. I’m not going to take a break.”

“So you agree there’s a problem here!” Ed says. “You agree we have a bullshit problem here!”

“Ed, Ed.” Mauricio tsks. “That kind of language—”

“That is the appropriate language!” says Ed. “That is the correct term!” He’s starting to feel good in his mutiny. Starting to feel like himself again. He is sitting at the conference table and he has a bit of a paunch, but figuratively he stands on the deck of a ship, Captain Blood, sabre drawn, challenging all comers.

“I’d like to ask our leader how to proceed,” says Sister Elaine.

“Look, I speak as a member of the group,” Mather says at last, “and I can only say, as a group member, that I sense a lot of anger here. But I’ve found in situations like this that sometimes, when we’re at the lowest point of confusion, we’re really on the verge of something.”

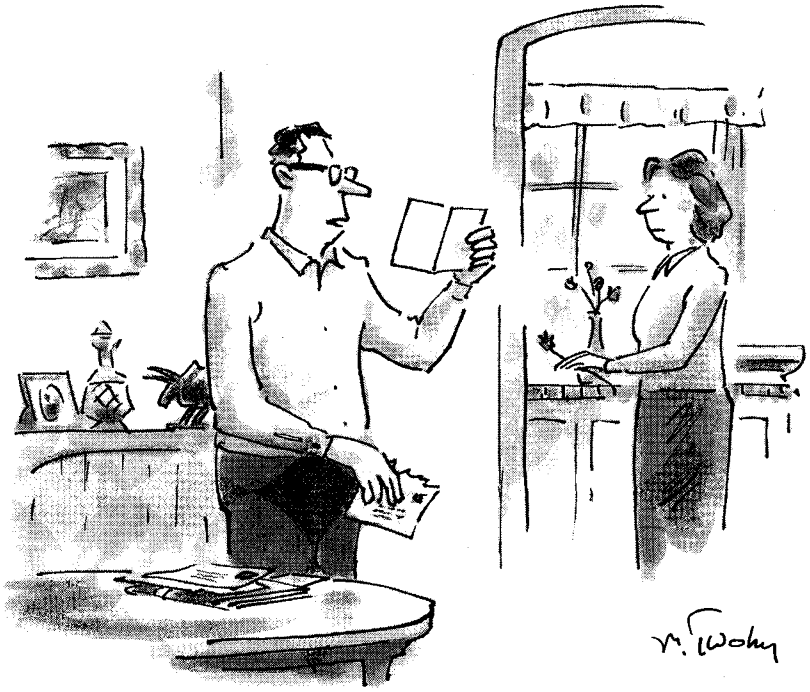
“I am not confused,” Ed says. “I am rejecting this project!”

“You are rejecting ecumenical dialogue?” Mauricio asks.

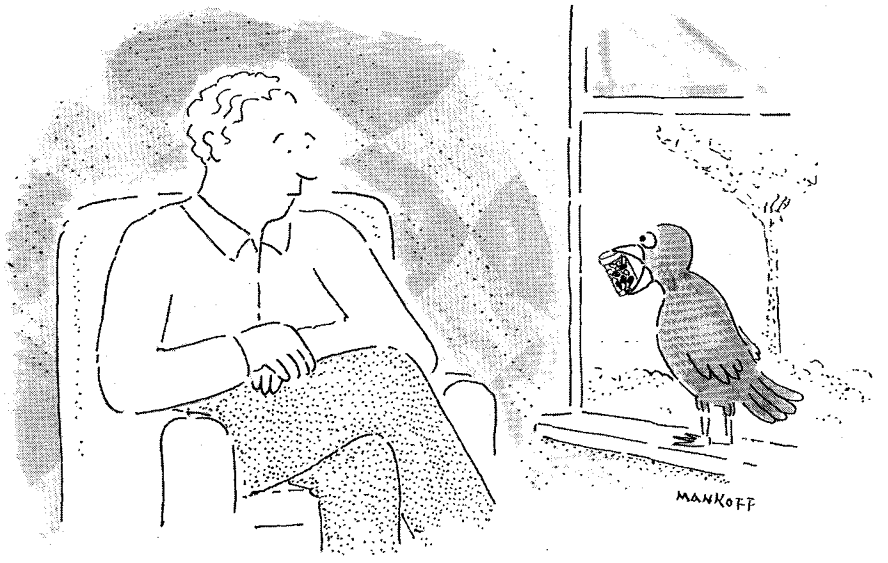
“No, I’m rejecting therapeutic backrubbing! Interfaith tick-pulling.”

“Ed,” Mather says. “Don’t underestimate the opportunity we have here. I’ve sat in this room and seen the Nobel Prize winner in physics connect with process theology. I’ve watched a new generation of astronomers talk about God and find him in themselves. I’ve seen Protestants, Jews, and Catholics come to terms with anti-Semitism, poverty, and the environmental crisis, and I’ve watched great scholars break through—break free from academic jargon. Don’t underestimate the process.”

Ed leans forward in his chair. “Look, am I asking too much when I say I want to process as a professional—as an adult? I’d be happy to hear about Rabbi Lehrer’s work. Why do I have



“The Bolsons are pleased to announce that their daughter, Naomi, is going to take another shot at marriage.”



"Hiya, hiya, hiya, guy. I'm the bluebird of Prozac."

• •

to hear about his mother? Avner, I'd be delighted to discuss Scripture in the Third World. I don't want to hear about the dark night of the soul, O.K.?"

Avner glares at Ed. "I do not want to hear this abuse at the conference. This is an insult! Unprofessional!"

"You're lecturing *me* about unprofessional?" Ed bursts out.

"Stop! Stop!" Marthe wails. "I feel here too many tenses—"

"Tensions," Elaine amends.

"And they make me too painful!" Marthe says. "We cannot go on like a garden, everything growing into each other. We must have a leader to make prunes—and—and—cuttings, so," she illustrates with her hands. "If Rich will not, we must choose another and a new idea. This one is finished, and can do no more."

"I think," Elaine says, "the personal statements had a certain limited value. But they can carry us only so far. Maybe it's a good thing Ed provided that critical perspective for us. We may actually owe Ed a vote of thanks."

"Well—" Ed begins.

"No, don't answer me, Ed." Elaine holds up her hand to scattered laughter.

"I do think it's time for something new," says old Brother Marcus. "Everyone has spoken, anyway."

"Actually, I haven't yet," Bob Hemmings mentions shyly, "but I guess that's not important." He puts aside his notes with a slight gesture of regret. "I'd like to offer a suggestion, though, because we've had some hard feelings. I know most of us, being Biblical people, turn to the Bible for guidance. I know I do. I even listen to it on tape—in the car, on my Walkman—and I always hear new things. And I thought maybe we could turn to some passage now, and read or listen together. I was thinking about something like Isaiah 40."

"Oh, yes, excellent, Isaiah 40," Elaine says. "It's so—"

"Comforting," Mauricio finishes.

"No," Elaine says witheringly, "that's not what I was thinking of at all."

"I don't have my Bible, I'm afraid," Brother Marcus says.

"Neither do I," admits Bob.

"I have not brought it with me," Marthe says, blushing into her sunburn.

"All right, wait a minute here," Bob says, laughing. "Can it be that not a single person at the table has a Bible?"

"I do," Rabbi Lehrer tells them. "Of course, it's all in Hebrew."

"I could run to the college library and get some Bibles," Brother Matthew offers.

"But which edition?" Bob asks.

"Each translation mangles worse and worse," rumbles Avner.

"I'll recite," Elaine breaks in, with a clarity that comes, Ed imagines, from her years of teaching primary school. "Isaiah 40," she announces, "King James version: 'Comfort ye, comfort ye my people, saith your God. Speak ye comfortably to Jerusalem, and cry unto her, that her warfare is accomplished, that her iniquity is pardoned: for she hath received of the Lord's hand double for all her sins.' " Elaine is an unfulfilled actress. This much is clear. She recites with passion. She looks her listeners in the eye and declaims ferociously, as if she were the rebuking prophet: " 'Who hath measured the waters in the hollow of his hand, and meted out heaven with the span, and comprehended the dust of the earth in a measure?' " Her memory finally fails her at " 'Behold, the nations *are* as a drop of a bucket, and are counted as the small dust of the balance.' " They all applaud her, and Rabbi Lehrer, who has been following in his own book, picks up where she leaves off, chanting in Hebrew in a surprisingly deep bass-baritone.

"Let us hold hands!" Marthe whispers.

"Let's not and say we did," mutters Ed. Nevertheless, he is amazed by the old rabbi's performance, his beautiful phrasing.

Brother Matthew shakes the rabbi's hand afterward. "The traditional chanting!" he says.

"You read it so faithfully," Elaine tells him.

"Well," says Mauricio, "may I propose we break for dinner? The main dining hall will close, you see, and for the kosher meals—"

"But we should make plans for the morning," Elaine says. "Rich, what should we do? It's our last day."

"Small groups, I think." Rich looks exhausted. "I think we'll have to move into small groups."

They get up for dinner, but Brother Matthew calls them back. He has a little camera. "Let me get a picture of everyone," he says. "Over there by the wall. Rich, Ed, could you kneel down in front? Mauricio, you stand between Elaine and Marthe."

"Ah! Like the Latin lover!" says Mauricio, with his arms around the two women in the group.

"Bob, can you lean in a little? Now, everyone, say 'celibacy'!"

At dinner, Ed takes a table with Mauricio and Bob. Then he gets up and steps outside. He needs to cool down. Standing on the dining-hall steps with his bagel-dog, he looks out at the magnificent late-afternoon sky. The birds are gathering in the trees, and he listens to their rippling voices. He breathes deeply. It is only his imagination, he tells himself—his own paranoia: that tiny sound gathering force in the grass by the lake. That maddening, delicate whine, the rising voices of mosquitoes. ♦

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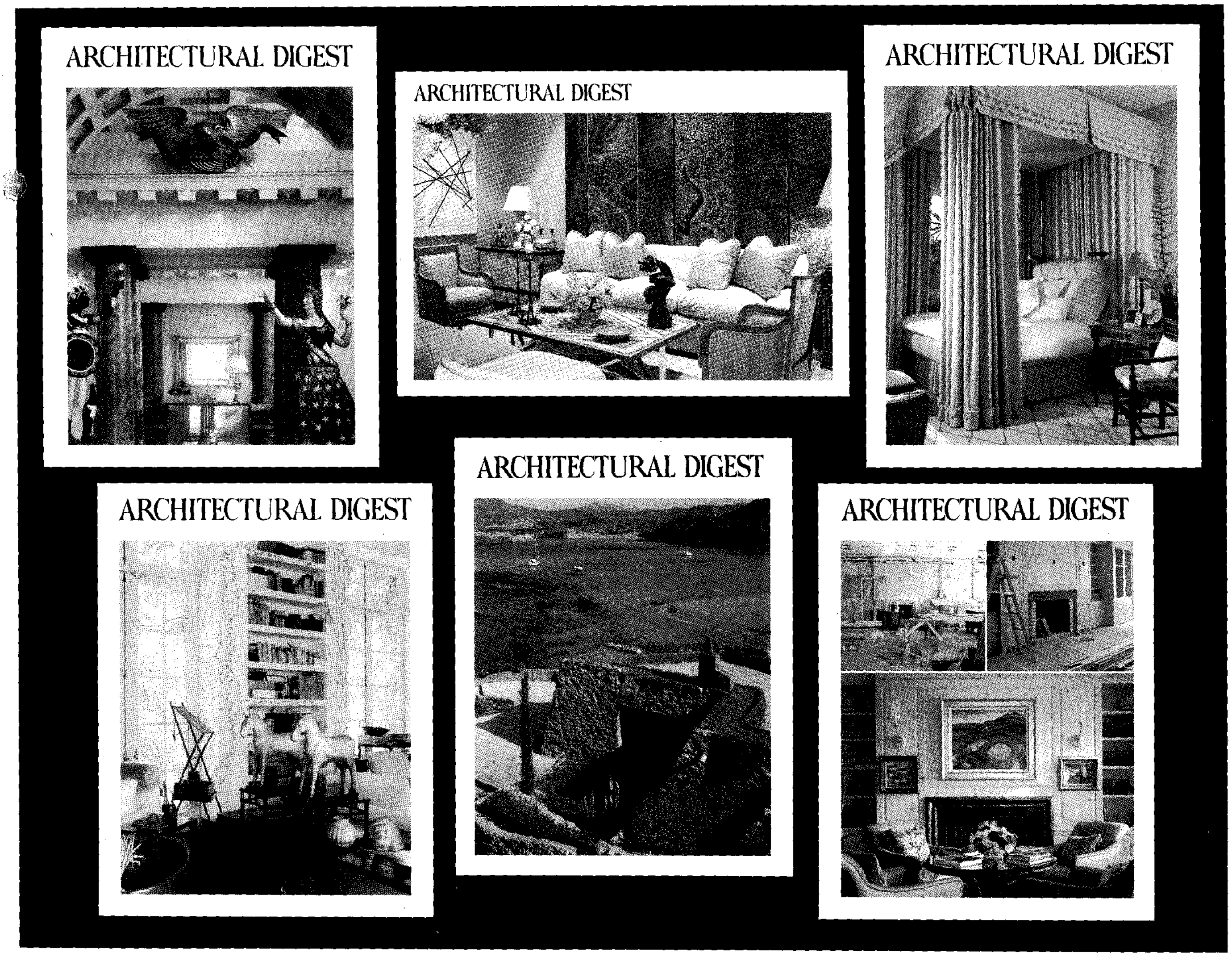

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THE CRITICS

BOOKS

THE OTTOLINE EMPIRE

BY CHRISTOPHER RICKS

OTTOLINE. Even better, *Lady* Ottoline. All together, now: Lady Ottoline Morrell. And there is conjured up the great hostess of yesteryear. Over six feet and flame-haired as well, in all her lofty extravagance, with her famous interior decorating and her notorious exterior decoratedness. Her preposterous hats, her peacocks. "After all, there's only one Ottoline." By 1928, when D. H. Lawrence wrote this in a letter to her, he was trying to cheer her up in her raddled years, urging her to let bygones be. Lawrence didn't mean much more than that the grand social figure was somehow unique—while he held "after all" in reserve, in case they were to quarrel again about his having created from her the inflammable Lady Hermione Roddice of "Women in Love."

She was christened Ottoline Violet Anne Cavendish Bentinck, back in the summer of 1873, and a silver-spoon mouthful it was. As for "Morrell," it was a Tory family of solicitors into which Lady Ottoline married, in 1902, and to which she brought lustre, being so liberal with her favors as hostess and mistress. The name rhymes, we are told, with Durrell, stressed on the first syllable. Lytton Strachey ponderously dubbed her Lady Omega Muddle.

She is immediately "Ottoline" in Miranda Seymour's generous and disconcerting biography, "Ottoline Morrell: Life on the Grand Scale" (Farrar, Straus & Giroux; $30). Only three lines into the introduction we meet her, without a proper introduction. This unmisgiving "Ottoline" is an impertinent portent: it sides. For this is a biography with a mission: to protest against the leechlike behavior of Lady Ottoline's false friends—the spite that travestied an honorably passionate woman as a grotesque figure of fun. The biographer's indignation, together with her affection for the strangely touching figure, lends the story pace and verve. Seldom does Seymour's laudable praise dwindle into a P.R. job for O.M.

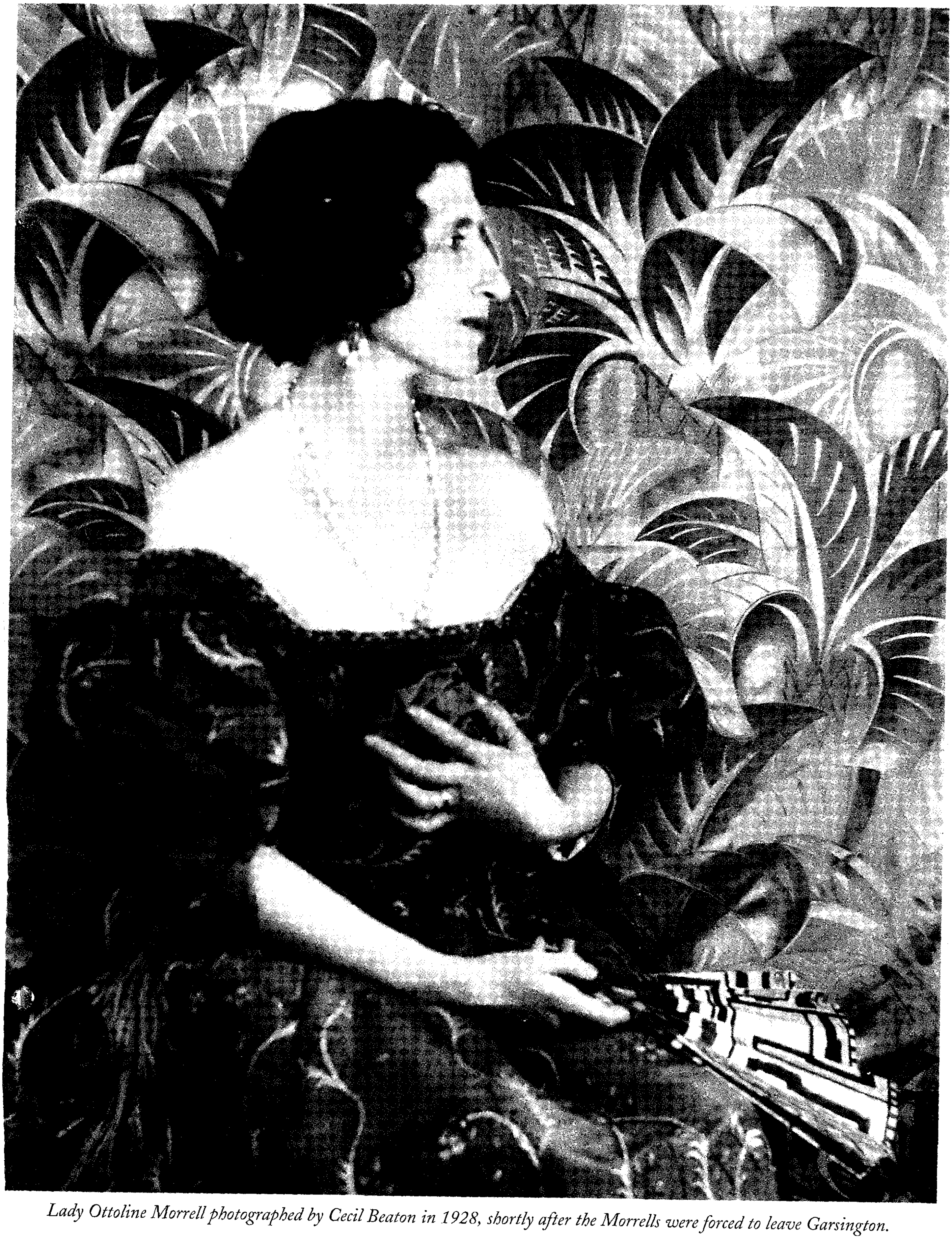
What was it, exactly, that Ottoline did? Well, good works, all her life. These were pious at first, like hymn groups and Bible classes. In her late twenties, there was a scheme for urban women's libraries, and attempts to find work for unemployed women. But it was after 1915, when she and her husband, Philip, settled into their country house at Garsington, near Oxford, that, conscientiously, she provided a haven for conscientious objectors during the Great War. And, flamboyantly, she hit her social stride. Addicted to winning friends and influencing people, she hostessed. She was a matron of the arts.

Neither she nor her husband inherited a great deal of money, but they did not do at all badly; she had the money and the taste to create the Italianate gardens of Garsington, and fashioned her home as a venue, all color and culture and chatter. When, in the late twenties, lacerated by ingratitude and chafed by money worries (not by any such poverty as many have to reckon with), she and Philip sold Garsington and moved to the modesty of Gower Street, in London, it was a kind of dying. For Lady Ottoline, the final dying (a medical botch) came in April, 1938.

The stage army of high culture had trooped through her halls. The jamboree starts to feel like a Saul Steinberg march-past. Here come the Poets, among them Siegfried Sassoon, back from the trenches, alongside T. S. Eliot, buttoned-up, desperate to be invalided out of the war between the sexes. And the Painters: Augustus John, all bluff, beaming bohemianism; Henry Lamb, insinuatingly devious in person as in his art, a brilliantly malicious portraitist; Dorothy Brett, whose portrait of Lady Ottoline gave great offense. ("I have not made a prostitute of you," Brett maintained. "I swear I haven't.") Best of the lot, both humanly and on canvas, are the two painters whose work is still a tonic: Duncan Grant, refinedly genuine, and Walter Sickert, who always saw the real thing. And here come the Critics: Roger Fry, who was artily exquisite in wincing, and Clive Bell, the author of "Civilization" as he knew it, who went in for whinnying. Bringing up the rear, the Men of Letters and the Women of Letters: Logan Pearsall Smith and Vernon Lee, Axel Munthe and Virginia Woolf, who mimed friendship to Lady Ottoline's face, and sniffily mimicked her behind her back. Amid all the hubbub stands Lady Ottoline, breasting the babble. (She was not above babble herself. Even in the maladroit, she showed flair: "What a dear Wittgenstein is—*I love* him!" Or in insisting that Gilbert Murray's "Wind, wind of the deep sea" is "the only line in English to express the passionate soul of the Greeks.")

This is a cast of thousands, with bit parts and bitch parts for both sexes—but those who really count are few. First, there is her husband, a decent dull dog, a Member of Parliament, not only Liberal but liberal. He was always loyal, if seldom faithful, a figure to make the most conti-

COURTESY OF SOTHEBY'S LONDON



Lady Ottoline Morrell photographed by Cecil Beaton in 1928, shortly after the Morrells were forced to leave Garsington.

nent consort of our day seem colorfully ostentatious. (I mean, of course, Denis Thatcher.) Second, there is their daughter, Julian, so little the recipient of Lady Ottoline's attentions, so important in that very omission, even in her protests a waif.

But in the end it is less her family or her friends, or even her treacherous "friends," who animate her story than it is her lovers. The body of the book gives them body, rather as God—in whom she unremittingly, though relaxedly, believed—had given Lady Ottoline body. In 1917, Virginia Woolf wrote to her sister Vanessa:

> I was so much overcome by her beauty that I really felt as if I'd suddenly got into the sea, and heard the mermaids fluting on their rocks. How it was done I can't think; but she had red-gold hair in masses, cheeks as soft as cushions with a lovely deep crimson on the crest of them, and a body shaped more after my notion of a mermaid's than I've ever seen . . . swelling, but smooth.

Mermaids are sexually precarious, and it seems that Lady Ottoline did not much like sex, though it was not for want of trying. The roll of Lady Ottoline's lovers is impressive, most of them thrilling to the blueness of her blood. "Were it not for imagination, sir," rumbled Dr. Johnson, "a man would be as happy in the arms of a chambermaid as of a duchess." Lady Ottoline was not even a duchess, only the half-sister of a duke—but in due course she opened her arms.

She opened them to Bertrand Russell, a fellow-aristocrat, all pyorrhea and satyriasis and ripe prose. Russell, whom she found physically unattractive, is at his most spiritually unattractive when he combines high-minded concern with low insistence, as he did in 1914, when he wrote to reassure Lady Ottoline about its not mattering that he was now sleeping with Helen Dudley:

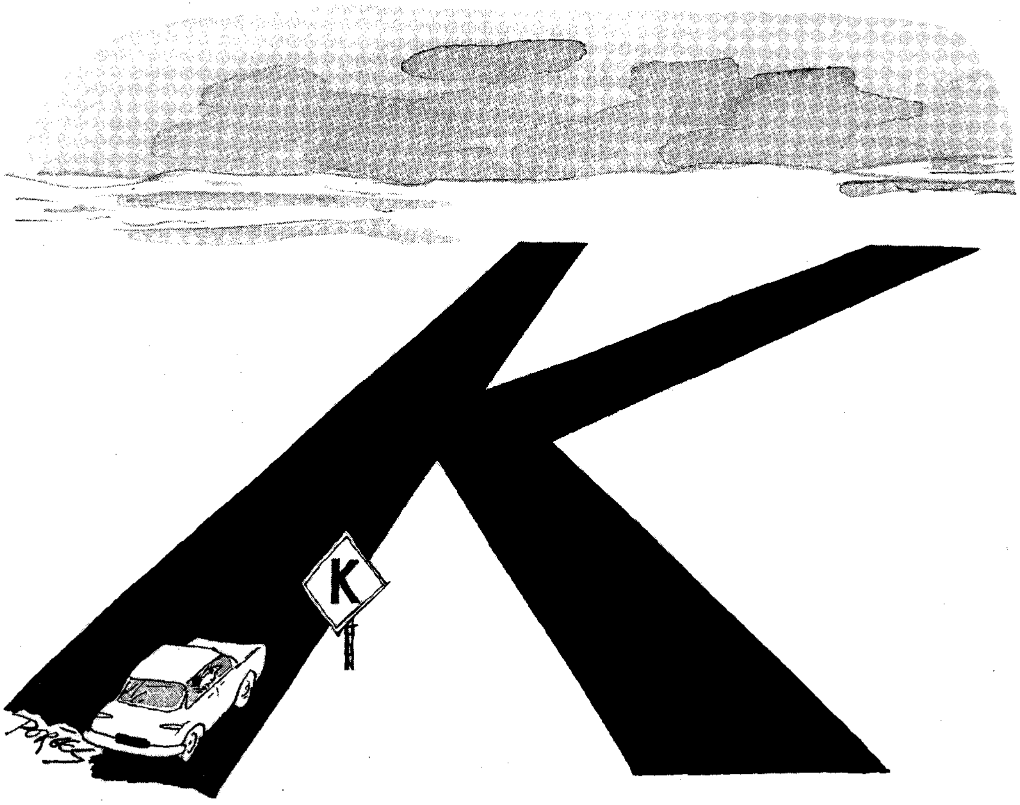
> I do not want you to think that this will make the very *smallest* difference in my feeling towards you, beyond removing the irritation of unsatisfied instinct. I suppose it must give you some pain, but I hope not very much if I can make you believe it is all right and that she is not the usual type of American.

But Lady Ottoline had her own means of removing the irritation of unsatisfied instinct. She gave herself to Henry Lamb, wheedler and diddler, and to Roger Fry, "an untrustworthy dog," she came to feel, "who softly pads up to one and licks one's hand, but who will nearly always turn and bite." Finally, endearingly, there enters Lionel Gomme, a young man from the village who in 1920 did some work in the gardens at Garsington. He was young enough to be her son (to be *her* son, Julian's twin, who had died in infancy), and he was Lawrencianly working-class enough to become Lady Ottoline's Lover—a relief from culture and from intellect, and a good sort. Suddenly, two years later, he lay in her arms in the stable yard, dead of a huge hemorrhage.

And then there surfaces the snag. For here I am, well on, and I have not yet uttered the word that the literary world seems to need a daily shot of: Bloomsbury. The snag is not only Lady Ottoline's but her biographer's. For it is a genuine but grievous source of strength to Miranda Seymour's book that it shares the predicament of its grande dame: it can live neither with nor without Bloomsbury. Seymour's Mission Rehabilitation is powered by two rocketing arguments about Bloomsbury's Lady Ottoline. First, that she was very effectively, and lastingly, caricatured and slighted by Bloomsbury. Second, that Bloomsbury doesn't much matter to her story anyway. The two claims are pitched at once:

> The main responsibility for Ottoline's spectacularly bad press lies with the Bloomsbury Group. Its members did not, as this biography will show, play a large part in her life, but it is the Bloomsbury annals which have effectively controlled our image of her since her death in 1938.

In practice, however, Seymour is no more able to cast off the spell of Bloomsbury than was Lady Ottoline. If Bloomsbury did not play a large part in her life, why is this biography billed as it is? "Miranda Seymour restores Ottoline Morrell's leading role in the Bloomsbury circle." The book is even summed up as "an unveiled look at Bloomsbury." I know, I know, a reviewer makes life too easy for himself or herself by making play with blurbs. But this time the contradiction is real. Although Seymour maintains that "Ottoline's connection with Bloomsbury would barely fill a chapter," pretty well every chapter of her book is filled with Bloomsbury talk. The realities are these. First, that Bloomsbury still entirely controls the terms within which Lady Ottoline is to be considered. Second, that, for reasons understandable but grim, Lady Ottoline wanted it that way—and so does Seymour's publisher, for when this book sells, as it should, it will be not because it understands a memorable woman, spirited and perverse, but because it teems with Bloomsbury tit-for-tattle. Ours is a literary world that is no less in collusion with Bloomsbury (even while teasing itself with protestations of disapproval) than it was back then. Our world vibrates to



Bloomsbury's. It is not just a matter of some uniquely English phenomenon or of some particular historical moment. The delectations of Bloomsbury are endemically snobbish, as Lady Ottoline herself knew and said, and they are quite as much so in the United States now as they were in England then and are now. And the essence of snobbery is treachery. For although the Bloomsbury set was much more treacherous about Lady Ottoline than she was about them, she remained in thrall to them. Sometimes she even picked up their habits. She touched pitch. It is a serious objection to Seymour's disposition that no more than Lady Ottoline does she see anything betraying about such an admission as this:

> Lytton's malice was always enjoyable when someone else was the target; it amused Ottoline to hear Fry dismissed as "a most shifty and wormy character," of Clive Bell "strutting around in dreadful style" as the great art expert . . . and of Lamb as an unscrupulous brute.

But aren't these people supposed to be *friends*? They lived on carrion comfort, the whole pack of them, and Lady Ottoline never sufficiently managed to protect her central decency against the unremitting indecency of backbiting. A sympathetic biographer can, and should, protect Lady Ottoline against them, but should not, and in the end cannot, protect Lady Ottoline against herself. She craved their company even while distrusting it. And, pathetically, no matter how treacherously venomous they were, Lady Ottoline came back for more.

Logan Pearsall Smith had said to her, in 1911, "You have the gift of life, and it is a temptation to your friends to become vampires." Soon, because of her affair with Russell (who was married to Pearsall Smith's sister), he was her undying enemy. Vampirishly, Virginia Woolf urged Lady Ottoline to write her memoirs: "Pick us all to pieces. Throw us to the dogs." But Woolf picked Lady Ottoline to pieces and threw her to the dogs: "as garish as a strumpet" and "like a foundered cab horse." Woolf wrote to her sister in 1926:

> You will be delighted to hear that Ottoline and Philip are behaving scandalously . . . it is said that Garsington presents a scene of unparalleled horror. Needless to say, I am going to stay there.

Needless to say? Because there would be so many opportunities for saying needlessly cruel things behind people's backs. Talk, talk, talk, and never a good word said—so all such society seemed to Lawrence. Woolf (and she was not the only two-faced one) was proud of how she doubly dealt with what "is called being intimate with Ottoline; I succumb: I lie; I flatter; I accept flattery; I stretch and sleek, and all the time she is watchful and vengeful and mendacious and unhappy and ready to break every rib in my body if it were worth her while."

I doubt whether Lady Ottoline wanted to break every rib in Virginia Woolf's body. I *don't* doubt that Lady Ottoline never sufficiently wanted to break with Virginia Woolf, or with the crew as a whole. They were too horribly entertaining and too entertainingly horrible. But then neither can Seymour break with them. She deplores them, but she, too, implores their company.

For my part, by the time Lady Ottoline, her jaw hideously destroyed by cancer, is being set down by Woolf—in what Seymour assures us is a "jocular" phrase—as tied up "in a nose-bag like an old horse," I felt I needed the bath that visitors to Garsington sanctimoniously said they wanted after the hospitality they had received.

A sad, bad business. Miranda Seymour cannot but be mired in the sadness, and, of course, it is businesslike of her to behave as if she could escape the contradiction that she, like Lady Ottoline, embraces. Still, as Matthew Arnold said of the Shelley lot, "What a set!" Lazily incurious, for all their gossip, they roused themselves enough to inflict upon Lady Ottoline a diversity of suffering. Oh, only petty fabrications, snickerings, predatory taking of advantage, duplicity—nothing worse. Without them, though, there is no story. But without her there would not have been the fine story that is "Women in Love."

Lawrence thrilled to a painting by Mark Gertler, "The Merry-Go-Round," vividly praised by Seymour, which evokes at once the huge tragedy of the Great War and the petty tragedy of the social whirl. The true merry-go-round was less merry than miserable. But then that, too, is an old story. In the words of Alexander Pope:

> As Hags hold Sabbaths, less for joy than
> spite,
> So these their merry, miserable Night;
> Still round and round the Ghosts of
> Beauty glide,
> And haunt the places where their
> Honour died. ♦

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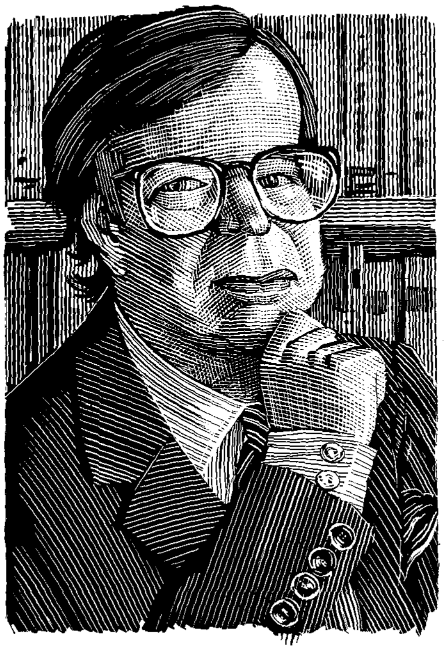
BOOKS

STRIFE'S DOMINION

BY STEPHEN L. CARTER

If Ronald Dworkin cannot quite get around the central contradiction in the abortion debate, what hope is there for the rest of us? Dworkin, who is a professor of law at New York University and University Professor of Jurisprudence at Oxford, is as thoughtful and creative a legal scholar as the American academy currently possesses; and his new book about abortion, "Life's Dominion" (Knopf; $23), is as thoughtful and creative a scholarly treatment as the subject is likely to receive. If the book's stated goal were to make a new and stronger case for a woman's right to choose, one would have to proclaim it a rousing success. But Dworkin sets himself a loftier goal: the fashioning of an argument that will persuade the opponents of abortion to abandon their fight.


In "Life's Dominion," Ronald Dworkin explores new grounds for compromise in the battle over abortion.

In recent years, pro-choice intellectuals have been much occupied by the problem of persuading pro-life forces to "compromise." Laurence Tribe, in his 1990 book, "Abortion: The Clash of Absolutes," argued that pro-life activists should realize that anything short of full and unfettered access to abortion is cruel to the women whose lives are affected. Roger Rosenblatt, in his 1992 book, "Life Itself," suggested that opponents of abortion should be satisfied if abortion was widely available but the states remained free to discourage it. In both cases, abortion-rights supporters seemed surprised when their opponents dismissed these "compromises" as surrenders. But no other result was possible. The abortion debate ultimately pivots on a question to which instinct, not reason, seems to supply the answer: Does the pregnant woman's right to decide whether to bear a child outweigh the state's authority to protect the fetus? If you believe that it does, no pro-life arguments are likely to convince you otherwise; if you believe that it does not, no pro-choice arguments will change your mind.

What is remarkable about the recent spate of serious pro-choice tomes is the consistency with which their authors underestimate the commitment of their opponents. They seem unwilling to accept the idea that pro-life activists are as sincere and as thoughtful in striking the balance in favor of the fetus as abortion-rights activists are in striking the balance the other way. Dworkin, to his credit, understands this weakness in the scholarship, and he tries to get around it by shifting the focus away from the question of when human life begins to the subtly different question of what is sacred about life.

The "conventional, pessimistic understanding of the character of the abortion argument," he announces at the outset, "is based on a widespread intellectual confusion." Once that confusion is dispelled, "we will see that a responsible legal settlement of the controversy, one that will not insult or demean any group, one that everyone can accept with full self-respect, is indeed available." In other words, once we understand his reasoning, we will see that there is no need for our vicious public debates: everyone will be satisfied.

Dworkin's ensuing argument is all that one may fairly ask of a scholar: thoughtful, measured, and generous toward those who do not agree with him. It is written with grace, warmth, and even an unexpected touch of humor. Indeed, its only problem is that it is finally unpersuasive—that, despite its boldly stated ambitions, it is not likely to bring peace to the warring sides. On the contrary, it will probably leave pro-life activists smoldering with rage.

Ever since the Supreme Court announced, twenty years ago, in Roe v. Wade, that the constitutional right to privacy is broad enough, at least in some circumstances, to include the choice to end a pregnancy, legal scholars have worked to rest the decision on a firmer foundation than the one the justices offered in an opinion which nearly everyone agrees was unsatisfactory. In Roe, the Court discovered the abortion right in the language of the Fourteenth Amendment, which forbids the state to deprive citizens of liberty without due process of law. Although previous decisions had also found privacy rights there—for example, the right to use contraceptives (Griswold v. Connecticut) and the right to send children to a private school (Pierce v. Society of Sisters)—many scholars who supported the Roe result were uneasy with the broad argumentative leaps the Court was forced to make in order to come out where it did. Some purists have argued that the abortion right, if it is to be found in the Fourteenth Amendment at all, must stem from the clause prohibiting the states from abridging the privileges and immunities of citizens of the United States; a handful of dreamers have insisted that the proper source is the perfectly opaque language of the Ninth Amendment, which provides "The enumeration in the Constitution, of certain rights, shall not be construed to deny or disparage others retained by the people"; feminist scholars have argued that abortion is about equality, not privacy, and should therefore rest on the equal-protection clause of the Fourteenth Amendment.

Given today's fragile but clear national consensus in favor of Roe, one might suppose that scholars would see the virtue of leaving well enough alone. Instead, much of the pro-choice scholarship that one finds in the law reviews has about it an air of desperation, as though

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all abortion rights will be lost unless a way can be found to justify the politically popular constitutional rule in terms so forceful in their legal formalism that pro-lifers will have reason to doubt and doubters will be converted. As with all works of desperation, the results have been disappointing.

A particular difficulty for pro-choice scholars, many of whom prefer to paint the issue as one pitting men against women, is that lots of women are on the other side. Indeed, the assumption that restrictions on abortion are a creation of men for the oppression of women flies in the face of both data and history. Most surveys show that men are more supportive of abortion rights than women are—which may be why some pro-choice feminists criticize the privacy rationale for *Roe* v. *Wade* as a tool for facilitating the heterosexual availability of women. (*Roe*, says Catharine MacKinnon, removed the one remaining excuse for refusing sex, after the headache.)

Many women who consider themselves feminists—among them such scholars as Jean Bethke Elshtain and Elizabeth Fox-Genovese—are uneasy with the broad claims of pro-choice activists. There is far too much sensitive feminist pro-life scholarship for its casual dismissal as oxymoronic. Most of the leading nineteenth-century feminists opposed abortion as a violent male solution to a woman's problem. Today's pro-life feminists tend to be among the most philosophically consistent opponents of abortion, for many of them also oppose the death penalty, war, and the killing of animals. A further difficulty is that much of the academic writing on abortion has become as polemical as the public protests against it—especially in the vituperation aimed at pro-life activists, who are treated with the snobbish disdain that, as Christopher Lasch has recently written, élite intellectuals tend to lavish on everyone but themselves.

Ronald Dworkin, it must be said, marches fearlessly into this realm where other thoughtful legal scholars tread with caution, if they tread at all. He makes no effort to hide his prejudices: he is unapologetically pro-choice. If *Roe* v. *Wade* were reversed, he warns, "that would be a bleak day in American constitutional history, for it would mean that American citizens were no longer secure in their freedom to follow their own reflective convictions in the most personal, conscience-driven, and religious decisions many of them will ever make." This, indeed, is the heart of his argument, and thus of his proposed compromise: a vision of the woman's abortion decision as driven less by personal need or desire than by a personal judgment on how to value the sanctity of life.

According to Dworkin, every abortion (like every act of euthanasia, which he also discusses) is a waste of life. Indeed, he says, nearly all of us agree that abortion is undesirable and that human life is sacred, and these areas of broad consensus are evidence of important commonalities between arguments for and against abortion rights—commonalities that Dworkin believes we can exploit in the search for a compromise.

One's initial inclination is to doubt whether commonalities can possibly exist, especially in the minds of committed advocates, because the abortion debate famously suffers from the polarizing rhetoric of demonization: the baby-killers who are perpetrating America's own holocaust versus the religious zealots who oppress women and murder doctors. Dworkin wants us to divorce the style of the debate from its substance, to worry less about what people say than about what they really mean.

Dworkin's hope for compromise lies in convincing us that "most people who oppose abortion" actually do so for reasons that are what he calls "detached" rather than "derivative"—that is, for most Americans the pro-life instinct rests on a vision of the intrinsic value of all life, not on a vision of the rights and interests of the fetus. Survey data show consistently that most Americans believe that aborting a pregnancy is as bad as killing a child and simultaneously believe that abortion should, in most circumstances, be a woman's choice. Because these beliefs are inconsistent, Dworkin says, one of the two is not accurately stated. For Dworkin, the one that people say they believe but do not is that abortion is like murder: "It is very hard to make any sense of the idea that an early fetus has interests of its own, in particular an interest in not being destroyed, from the moment of its conception," he says, because, until "some point relatively late in its gestation," the fetus lacks "the neural substrate necessary for interests of any kind." All of us, he says, think abortion "is always morally problematic and often morally wrong." But the reason we feel that way, Dworkin argues, is not that many people sincerely believe that the fetus is human, and possesses the concomitant rights and interests, but that we envision life itself as sacred. Consequently the abortion debate is not really about *whether* human life is sacred; it's about "how and why" human life is sacred.

Armed with this understanding, Dworkin is able to jump to his moral and constitutional conclusion (he draws no important distinction between the two), locating the right to abortion far away from the privacy arena in which the battle over Roe has traditionally been fought. He regards the right to "procreative autonomy" as a part of our freedom of religion, since "a state has no business prescribing what people should think about the ultimate point and value of human life, about why life has intrinsic importance, and about how that value is respected or dishonored in different circumstances." After all, he tells us, "it is a terrible form of tyranny, destructive of moral responsibility, for the community to impose tenets of spiritual faith or conviction on individuals."

Although this may sound like standard pro-choice rhetoric, Dworkin is at pains to insist that his route to this conclusion is different. For example, he accepts (albeit with frank skepticism) the possibility of restrictions that many in the abortion-rights movement consider anathema, such as waiting periods or parental-notification requirements. "It is perfectly consistent to insist that states have no power to impose on their citizens a particular view of how and why life is sacred," he says, "and yet also to insist that states do have the power to encourage their citizens to treat the question of abortion seriously."

Another distinction between Dworkin's book and much that is written in the pro-choice cause is his attitude toward religion. Many on the pro-choice side want instinctively to bar from public debate pro-life activists whose opposition rests in whole or in part on religious conviction; indeed, some in the academy have come to talk about the devoutly religious the way Patrick Buchanan talks about homosexuals. Dworkin disagrees. Religious groups, he reminds us, "were among the strongest

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campaigners against slavery” and have fought for “a vast variety of other humanitarian goals.” If the separation of church and state “barred government from taking up those causes . . . the doctrine would paralyze government altogether.” Indeed, it is this instinct that Dworkin seeks to invert. He maintains that just as people whose religious beliefs lead them to oppose abortion have rights that the government cannot ignore, every woman, religious or not, who seeks for herself the answer to the intrinsically religious question of how to value sacred human life has a right that the government cannot ignore.

Dworkin reaches the same conclusion, in slightly different terms, in a short but sparkling discussion of euthanasia. The difficulty of establishing categories into which everyone will fit, he thinks, is a reason not to try: “Whether it is in someone’s best interests that his life end in one way rather than another depends on so much else that is special about him—about the shape and character of his life and his own sense of his integrity and critical interests—that no uniform collective decision can possibly hope to serve everyone even decently.”

Dworkin, in short, provides an attractive vision of human dignity which requires respect for individual choices about how to value the lives that all of us agree are sacred. Unfortunately, though, when it is offered as a resolution of the abortion dilemma the vision has two crucial flaws. First, it does not add up to a constitutional argument of sufficient force to convince those who disagree with him. Second, and more fundamental, Dworkin’s vision paints an unrealistic portrait of abortion opponents. It is the second problem more than the first that ultimately dooms his imaginative effort at compromise.

Dworkin devotes three chapters to constitutional law, and much of the important material they contain is presented with a rigor that is useful for scholars but will be rough going for the lay reader. It is not possible in a brief space to give a fair portrait of the details of his constitutional argument, but it is useful to say a word about his methodology. As he has in other work, Dworkin here defends an approach to constitutional adjudication based on a distinction between the *concept* that each constitutional provision represents—the broad value for which it stands—and the narrower *conception* that its authors held of the way it would work in practice. For example, one might think of the equal-protection clause of the Fourteenth Amendment as embodying a general concept of racial equality, even though the people who wrote and ratified the amendment probably held the narrower conception that racial equality could exist even if schools remained segregated. The judge who enforces what Dworkin calls the “constitution of principle” will enforce the broad underlying concept, not the possibly mistaken conception.

Dworkin’s dichotomy is understandably controversial, and it has drawn fire from right and left alike. This is not the place to recapitulate the controversy. But, unsurprisingly, the abortion controversy shows his approach (and most others) at its weakest. For in Dworkin’s scheme the justices and scholars who reject abortion rights, no less than the ones who support them, can insist that their conclusions are rooted in the broad principles underlying the constitutional language: principles like community, deference to elected authority, and respect for the sanctity of life. The fact that these might not be the principles that Dworkin, or I, would find underlying the relevant constitutional language does not mean that those who do find them there are enforcing only a narrow, ahistorical conception of rights, rather than a broad concept. They are simply making different choices.

Dworkin has argued in other work, especially his fine book “Law’s Empire,” that the enforcement of broad concepts does not leave everything up for grabs. In theory, he may be correct. In practice, however, a constitution of open language to be filled by the edicts of independent judges is a scary thing, which is probably the reason that precious few scholars, politicians, or activists, on either the left or the right, seem enamored of judges who are so independent that their votes on difficult issues cannot easily be predicted. Dworkin himself, in other writing, has stated what he implies here—that nominees who do not give us the information we need to make these predictions should not be confirmed.

The reason to labor this point is that it is harder than Dworkin suggests to divide the camps warring over the legal correctness of Roe v. Wade into those who support broad readings of the due-process clause and those who would nar-

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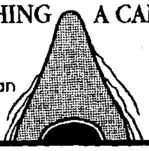

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row our rights to the tiny sliver that its authors probably intended. Even many prominent liberal constitutionalists—people who would surely fit Dworkin's model of exalting concept over conception on other issues—think Roe v. Wade was poorly reasoned, went too far, or both. Judge Ruth Bader Ginsburg, currently streaking toward senate confirmation as the newest justice of the Supreme Court, has made precisely these points.

Besides, the correctness of judicial reasoning is at best a tiny corner of the abortion battle. Most lawyers, scholars, politicans, and voters who hold strong views on Roe care only about the scope of the right to abortion, not about whether it is grounded, as the Supreme Court held, in the due-process clause of the Fourteenth Amendment or, as Dworkin suggests, in the free-exercise clause of the First Amendment. Consequently, in our popular conversation the constitutional division becomes identical to the moral division, and this is a difficulty that Dworkin has not successfully elided: no one will be convinced by Dworkin's case for the legal correctness of Roe unless he or she is convinced by Dworkin's case for the moral imperative of leaving the abortion choice to the pregnant woman and her own personal vision about what it means to say that life is sacred.

THE trouble with Dworkin's solution to the problem of moral conversation is the same as the trouble with his solution to the problem of legal conversation: although he plainly seeks to engage in a dialogue with those who disagree with him, he ultimately creates a dialogue between himself and people who do not exist. In the first place, for all Dworkin's certainty that few people actually believe that the fetus is a human being clothed with rights and interests, leading figures in the pro-life movement speak eloquently and forcefully to the contrary. Dworkin tells us that most of those who march under banners proclaiming angrily that abortion is murder cannot possibly believe what their placards insist, because, among other things, the early fetus lacks vital neural development. But all that this tells us, really, is that Dworkin cannot get his mind around the argument—which is another way of saying that he disagrees with its premise. He may mean us to understand that no reasonable person could honestly

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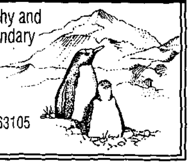

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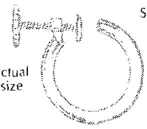

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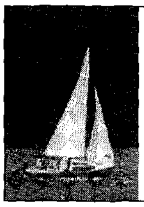

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conclude that aborting a fetus is like murdering a human being, but if this is what he thinks he is simply wrong. Many reasonable people believe precisely that, and they mean it as literal truth, not as metaphor. Dworkin may be correct that there is a degree of incoherence in this unyielding certainty, but his ability to challenge the premise of the pro-life position does not prove that nobody accepts it. One cannot make an opponent disappear by pretending that he or she is really somebody else.

Dworkin is prepared to transform derivative arguments for the fetus's right to life into detached arguments about the sanctity of fetal life, but scholars make moves of that kind at their peril. He strives for a sensible caution: "My claim is not . . . that people do not know what they think, but rather that we cannot discover what they think simply by fixing on the high rhetoric of the public debate." But is this right? In political debate, it is usually safer to assume that one's opponents mean what they say. If some pro-life banners proclaim that abortionists murder babies, Dworkin's insistence that most of them are carried by people who do not really mean it is not likely to convince either committed anti-abortion forces or worried abortion-rights activists. Indeed, it is precisely at this point in his argument that Dworkin's own pro-choice predilections lead him astray: he ascribes to those who disagree with him a set of opinions that are consistent with his views, not theirs.

Dworkin believes that a fetus lacks the biological aspects of the human being and cannot possess "rights or interests of the kind that government might have a derivative responsibility to protect," because such derivative rights, by his definition, attach only to human beings. But one can imagine a pro-life response: derivative rights attach to *all* sacred life, human or not. I am not sure that Dworkin can answer this argument except by restating his definition. But, if one cannot get past this point, even the pro-life activist who agrees that the argument is really over how to value the sacred will not be convinced that the law must therefore respect the conscience of the individual. This is where the familiar, if controversial, analogy between abortion and slavery gets in his way: the slaveholder, too, might have said that his possession was not human, so that the abolitionists were making only detached—not derivative—arguments. The racist absurdity of the claim does not, unfortunately, destroy the analogy.

Because the redefinition of the pro-life cause does not finally work, Dworkin winds up back where he started, with a certainty that the protection of dignity means that the state must not interfere with the decisions of women about what dignity requires for themselves and the fetuses they carry. Perhaps he is right; certainly he is in the mainstream; but the conception of dignity that he proposes turns out not to be universally shared. The deep divisions that he describes do not vanish in recharacterization; in the end, his argument exemplifies them more than it heals them.

YET there is hope, and the answer may lie in the place from which hope often springs: in the search for genuine national consensus. For the elusive truth is that the abortion argument is most divisive in the places dominated by warring activists—the media, the legislatures, and the courts. In the larger voting population, a comfortable majority sentiment for compromise already exists. Despite loud protests to the contrary (from pro-life and pro-choice forces alike), survey data show that the Supreme Court has positioned abortion law where most voters want it: general availability in the first trimester and heavy restrictions in the last trimester, with states always free to require waiting periods for all women and parental notification (perhaps even parental consent) in the case of minors. To be sure, there are pro-life activists who consider these compromises a craven capitulation, because they allow the death of too many fetuses, and there are pro-choice activists for whom every moderate restriction represents totalitarian horror, but the media's focus on the loud extremes in the argument masks the reality that most of the nation has already worked out the very compromise that opinion leaders continue to declare is impossible.

The possibility of establishing such consensus as fundamental law is made harder by the relentless media focus on activists and the consistent use of the terms "conservative" and "liberal" in ways that obscure the plain fact that most Americans are happy with the law as it is. Were the majority truly on the side of the most visible forces in the pro-life or pro-choice movements, the nomination to the Supreme Court of Ruth Bader Ginsburg, whose complex middle-ground view on abortion has provoked a degree of uneasiness among committed activists on both sides, would have been unthinkable. But it is increasingly clear that the middle ground is where most Americans want the law to be. In the introductory chapter, after canvassing the abortion laws in a number of other countries, Dworkin ponders the question of why "the war over abortion seems fiercer and more violent in America than anywhere else." He points to possible culprits—what he calls America's "ambivalence toward religion," and the fact that the American law of abortion is essentially a judicial rather than a legislative creation. But the abortion debate is less polarized than it seems; one need only study survey data instead of sound bytes. Perhaps the debate appears more polarized than it is because our courts have fashioned rules that leave less room here than elsewhere for those who are troubled by abortion to force even small compromises in the law—even compromises that have overwhelming public support.

Abortion, like so many divisive issues in the American past, will doubtless be settled in the end not by the victory of a warring faction but by compromise. Compromises, by their nature, possess the internal inconsistencies and contradictions that scholars, by their nature, abhor. Scholars want arguments to *make sense*; but politicians know that arguments have to *work*—which means, in the long run, that they must form the basis for a stable consensus. "Life's Dominion" is a useful book, and serious students of the abortion controversy will find it provocative and engaging. But Dworkin's argument, although it makes sense, does not really work in the end, because it turns out to be a blueprint for one faction's victory, offering little hope for true compromise. For true compromise, we must look not to scholarship but to politics. ♦

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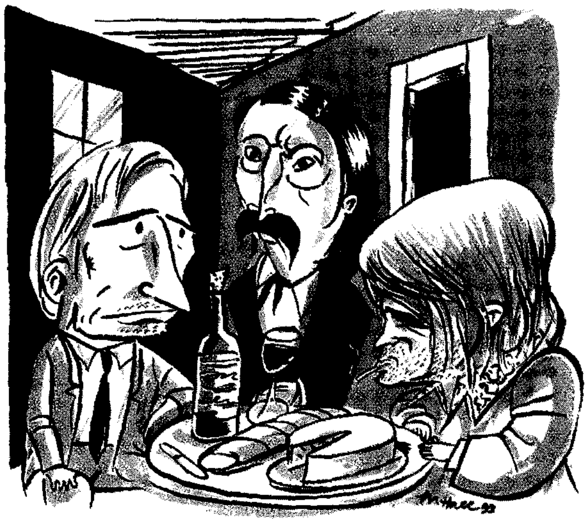
THE CURRENT CINEMA

A DOG'S LIFE

BY TERRENCE RAFFERTY

IN the opening scene of Aki Kaurismäki's beautiful new comedy, "La Vie de Bohème," the camera pans down from the romantic rooftops of nighttime Paris to a squalid alley, where a middle-aged man with a briefcase rummages through garbage cans, then slips and tumbles headlong into the debris. This slapstick scavenger proves to be Marcel (Andre Wilms), a man of letters whose dire financial state is the result, he feels, of the world's inexplicable indifference to his genius; producers and publishers are blind to the virtues even of his chef d'œuvre—"The Avenger," a drama in twenty-one acts. He's as skinny as a stray dog, and as resourceful. Just a few hours after being evicted from his miserable apartment, he manages to find, and to link his fortunes to, a couple of similarly forlorn examples of his species: a shy and courtly Albanian painter named Rodolfo (Matti Pellonpää) and a burly, fierce-looking composer named Schaunard (Kari Väänänen). Together, these dedicated but abjectly unsuccessful artists form a clique that has nothing to do with salons or schools or manifesto-fuelled aesthetic movements. They're allied for the noble purposes of friendship and subsistence, sharing whatever scraps of bounty they happen on as they roam the Paris streets. Marcel, Rodolfo, and Schaunard are the human counterparts of the "good dogs" eulogized by Baudelaire in the final pages of "Le Spleen de Paris"—"pitiful dogs, muddied dogs, those everyone shuns as stricken with plague and vermin, except the pauper, whose colleagues they are, and the poet, who considers them with a fraternal eye."



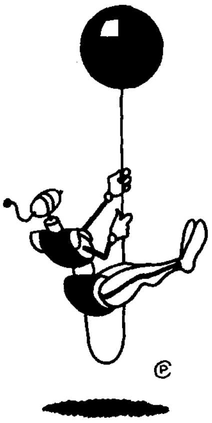
Andre Wilms, Matti Pellonpää, and Kari Väänänen in "La Vie de Bohème."

MARCELLUS HALL

And Kaurismäki—whose most recent film released in this country was "The Match Factory Girl" (1992), an austere but deeply funny fable about working-class desperation in his native Finland—gazes on this scruffy pack of misfits with an unmistakably fraternal eye. The hand-to-mouth existence of the characters in "La Vie de Bohème" looks like the most gracious and most honorable life imaginable. The movie is set in modern-day Paris, but everything on the screen has a timeless, almost archaic feel; a gas station, a handful of motor vehicles, and a punkish rock band are virtually the only indications that the artists' milieu Kaurismäki's people move in is not that of the mid-nineteenth century, when Henri Murger's "Scènes de la vie de Bohème"—the movie's source material—was published. Kaurismäki (who once made a picture called "Hamlet Goes Business," which replaced the court intrigues of Elsinore with the machinations of a contemporary Finnish corporation) dramatizes Murger's fictional sketches with hilarious fidelity, as if there were no need to update any aspect of the original. The apartments and the cafés in which the action takes place are weathered and stark, and the elegant black-and-white cinematography of Timo Salminen gives every surface the clear definition of something tenacious and imperishable. These settings are like time capsules, stuffed with objects that evoke a discarded conception of pleasure and luxury: smoking jackets, carved meerschaum pipes, box cameras, Turkish slippers. Rodolfo wears a sporty scarf tied around his neck when he goes out in public, and sometimes a beret when he paints.

The art-obsessed dreamers of "La Vie de Bohème" are anachronisms even in their manner of speech. They address their mistresses, their creditors, and their (few) patrons in shapely, correct, and exquisitely polite language, sometimes lifted directly from the pages of Murger. A letter (read in voice-over) in which Marcel tells his landlord that, regrettably, he is unable to pay the several months' rent he owes is full of exalted sentiments and well-turned phrases: "Our beautiful France and I will see better days" is perhaps the rhetorical peak. Rodolfo, having offered the only bed in his one-room apartment to a young woman in need, soberly explains to her why he cannot stay. "I am hot-blooded," he intones, "and you are very beautiful." And Schaunard, despite his somewhat barbaric demeanor, constructs his discourse as carefully as his comrades do theirs, and declaims it with comparable pride in its eloquence. (Both Pellonpää and Väänänen are Finnish, and their deliberate, heavily accented readings emphasize—to wonderful comic effect—the formal quality of the terribly literary French prose they're speaking.)

It's a credit to Kaurismäki, and to his superb trio of actors, that these ridiculous characters, who speak as if they were reciting fondly remembered lessons from literature classes at the lycée, never get on our nerves. The movie's bohemia is a stylized conception, but it isn't a precious one. Kaurismäki has created a kind of twilight world, half reverent and half ironic, which allows the ideals and the ardor of the nineteenth-century artist to persist, improbably, in these less idealistic and less ardent times. The sweet humor of "La Vie de Bohème" comes from its characters' utter marginality: they prowl and forage in their neglected neighborhoods, confining themselves to a zone that affords them the protection of insignificance. They are as solemn as children or animals at play. Their absorption in the game, which the larger society permits them to play as long as they don't make too much noise or bare their teeth, is funny and very touching. The three heroes of "La Vie de Bohème" all look to be on the wrong side of forty—much older than the youthful cutups of Murger's stories—and they have the peculiar dignity of aging innocents who have long since stopped worrying about looking silly. They're as charming and as dignified in their willingness to amuse us as ne'er-do-well uncles or spry vaudevillians.



Murger's book isn't a novel but a series of sketches with recurring characters, and Kaurismäki (who also wrote the screenplay) respects the random structure of his source. The book's offhand approach to narrative suits Kaurismäki anyway: his customary style is brisk, unfussy, and casually lyrical, and his scenes generally build to punch lines rather than to moments of great dramatic import. The blackout-punctuated episodes of "La Vie de Bohème" are impeccably timed. The film's pace is so sure that the raggedness of the storytelling never becomes a problem; we accept the stop-and-start tempo as the proper rhythm for the characters' unstructured lives. Rodolfo, Marcel, and Schaunard take their pleasures as they find them, and so does Kaurismäki. The artists' indigence is a constant, an unvarying principle. Lacking any reliable sources of income, they live in a state of perpetual crisis, with obstacles, large and small, cropping up daily in their simple-seeming pursuit of food, shelter, love, and beauty: Marcel requires a black jacket for an interview with a publisher; Schaunard needs female companionship; Rodolfo has run out of both paint and money. The situations present themselves suddenly and are swiftly resolved, often by means of creative chicanery. The grace of these characters (and of the movie) is that they seem to *enjoy* the desperate unpredictability of their day-to-day existence: the scrapes they get into quicken their pulses, break up the solitude of artistic activity, and provide them with unending opportunities for all-for-one heroism. Women who drift into their orbit tend to find their adventures a little wearing: Marcel's Musette (Christine Murillo) and Rodolfo's Mimi (Evelyne Didi) come and go, and in the end they're both gone for good.

There's one other important character in "La Vie de Bohème"—a figure that in some way embodies everything of value in this strange fraternity of down-and-outers. This character, seventh-billed in the credits, is Rodolfo's dog, Baudelaire (played by Kaurismäki's own dog, a silky black shepherd-mix named Laika, who has made cameo appearances in some of the director's previous films). In many of Baudelaire's scenes we see him lying next to an empty food dish in the artist's tiny apartment; he looks up hopefully, but doesn't complain. Sometimes the camera catches him reclining, odalisque-like, on the sofa, as if to inspire his master with a vision of beauty in sensuous repose. Like a true bohemian, in a time of emergency he's glad to share whatever he has: in a sublime comic scene, he gives up a prized bone so that Rodolfo can make soup for himself and Mimi. And Rodolfo's love affair with Mimi is no tenderer than his relationship with Baudelaire. The movie's most stirring romantic scene shows the artist's return after a long involuntary absence from Paris: as he approaches a reunion with Baudelaire, we hear the sound of excited barking, and Marcel and Schaunard leave their friend alone, turning away out of respect for the solemn intimacy of the moment. After a decent interval, they look around and discover Rodolfo and Baudelaire cavorting blissfully together in a vacant lot. In "La Vie de Bohème" Kaurismäki finds the loveliest, most delicate humor in the brotherhood of outcasts, and all the good dogs of Paris have their day. ♦

In recent weeks, Salaman and other young women who sell hot dogs along Pinellas County roadways have found themselves fighting to keep their businesses alive—and their clothes off.

Salaman and the others wear thong bathing suits that expose most of their backsides to traffic. It's a great way to attract customers, but recently Pinellas County Sheriff Everett S. Rice decided that it also violates laws against peddling food along public roadways with exposed buttocks.—*St. Petersburg* (*Fla.*) *Times.*

What about soft shoulders?

BOOKS BRIEFLY NOTED

GENERAL

Spy Trader
by Craig R. Whitney
(Times; $25)

WOLFGANG VOGEL is a lawyer who, under the supervision of East Germany's secret police, negotiated for the Communists in Cold War spy swaps. In his first famous trade, in 1962, Rudolf Abel, a Soviet spy in American hands, was exchanged for Francis Gary Powers, the captured American U-2 pilot; his last big deal, in 1986, freed the Soviet dissident Anatoly Shcharansky. But most of his work was done on behalf of nearly thirty-five thousand ordinary East Germans, some of them dissidents or prisoners, whom the West German government was willing to ransom. Vogel regarded his work as a humanitarian effort, and so did the Westerners who dealt with him, but after the Berlin Wall came down opinions changed. Whitney believes that Vogel is a scapegoat for the crimes of the former East German regime, partly because so few Communist leaders have been punished, and partly because West Germans don't realize what life was like on the other side of the Wall. Vogel's career, as this sensitive book portrays it, illustrates a moral dilemma of totalitarianism: Is it collaboration to work with an evil regime in the hope of ameliorating it?

Cavaliers and Roundheads: The English Civil War, 1642-1649
by Christopher Hibbert
(Scribners; $27.50)

THIS is a superb work of popularization, by one of the most prolific historians writing today. In 1639, England was a country at peace, a land of contentment and plenty; by 1642, it had been plunged into war. Whole counties were laid waste, castles and cathedrals were wrecked and plundered, towns were burned, and people everywhere were raped and robbed and murdered by soldiers of the opposing factions—the Cavaliers, who fought for King Charles I, and the Roundheads, who championed the cause of Parliament under Oliver Cromwell. Hibbert is a direct, hands-on historian; he deals with events—with what happened, and with the characters of the people involved—and is less concerned with causes. In this book he does try to explicate the conflict of political ideas—absolute monarchy and the divine right of kings versus parliamentary rule—and also the ideological rivalries that split the Church of England. But his main achievement is to give us the dramatic sweep of a tragedy that left a king beheaded, and nothing much resolved.

Hiding in Plain Sight: Essays in Criticism and Autobiography
edited by Wendy Lesser
(Mercury House; $21.95)

A FRESH anthology, compiled from contributions to *The Threepenny Review* by the magazine's editor. Lesser has attempted to find a common critical purpose in the thirty essays gathered here, but her argument is not very convincing. What is patent is that very many of the pieces are first-rate: Thom Gunn writes a searching memoir of his friendship with Christopher Isherwood; Elizabeth Hardwick seeks a judgment of the achievement of Gertrude Stein (and decides that she will endure as a precursor of minimalism); August Kleinzahler engages in some delicate demolition of the stature of S. J. Perelman as a humorist. There is also an informative disquisition by Lars Eighner, a homeless writer, on, among other things, what to eat and what not to eat of the food found in dumpsters; an acerbic reminiscence of waitressing in a large Jewish restaurant in Los Angeles, by Irene Oppenheim; and an urbane rumination by Gore Vidal on old Washington society and the people who really mattered there, in which he manages to drop a hatful of illustrious names, including his own.

The Hidden Life of Dogs
by Elizabeth Marshall Thomas
(Houghton Mifflin; $18.95)

THOMAS brings to the alien world of dogs the same openness and poise that characterize her anthropological studies of Bushmen and Dodoth tribesmen and her two superb novels set among Paleolithic people in northern Asia. That dogs have consciousness, thoughts, and emotions seems to her (as to most dog-lovers) obvious, and she cites a number of irrefutable examples of canine cogitation. Her field studies began with a six-month guest in her Cambridge home, a husky called Misha, who, in spite of fences, traffic, and leash laws, established a roaming range of a hundred and thirty square miles and never got injured or lost. Tailing him on foot and bicycle, at all hours, she deduced that the object of his wanderings was neither sex nor food but circling, sniffing encounters with other dogs, and the establishment of relative rank. As the number of her household dogs achieved the size of a pack, other behavioral traits emerged, of which the most startling was the dogs' secret construction of a wolvish den in their pen in Virginia, its entrance but twenty yards from Thomas's front door. Don't kid yourselves, primates: dogs are thoroughly dog-centered. "What do dogs want most? They want to belong, and they want each other." This stark conclusion takes on an eerie comedy when Thomas, determined "to visit a dog's mind," joins her pets in long afternoons of doing nothing—"like entering a quiet little village in some faraway country"—and, when one of them dies, inhales the "odor of dog, of wet dog" that upwells like a cry from the fur of the survivors.

FROM OUR PAGES

The Lands of Charm and Cruelty: Travels in Southeast Asia, a collection of pieces by Stan Sesser, has been published by Knopf ($23). Nearly all the contents first appeared in *The New Yorker*.

Alice in Bed, a play by Susan Sontag, has been published by Farrar, Straus & Giroux ($10, paper). Some of the contents originally appeared here. ♦

SHOUTS AND MURMURS

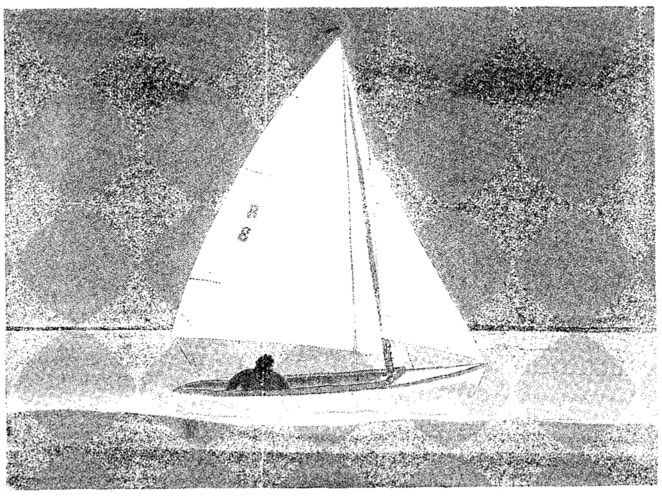
ANCIENT MARINER

BY ROGER ANGELL

MR. HOPPER, paint me a seascape. Give us an islanded bay—a sunlit reach, with water moving around ledgy, beachless shores and bold rises of spruce and hackmatack. Darker water, please: we're Down East, and a fingertip trailed idly overside here comes up pickled. Next, as centerpiece, a classic little keeled sloop, gaff-rigged, as in your day, just now close-reached and throwing an occasional splatter of white off her starboard bow as she steps along in the first morning breeze. The man at the helm sits at ease, his right hand on the leeward coaming and his left on the tiller; his sneakered right leg is comfortably up on the seat, and his gaze, behind shades and a faded Red Sox cap, is contented, for he has been here many times before. Forty years ago, in this selfsame Herreshoff 12½ (that's a waterline length), he might well have passed within a yard or two of this tack on the identical moment in August. The lone sailor is lucky and knows it, so why should he remind himself so perversely—I'll take it from here, Mr. Hopper—how many people, within view and beyond, begrudge him such happiness?

He is an old summer sailor is why; he is me, and I know that this aversion, while mostly unspoken, runs wide and deep. It is not a burden, but it's there, all right, a little onus that can never quite be shaken, and it turns an apparently harmless pastime into something only awkwardly shared, except with other sailors. Involuntarily, I am in holy orders. Let me list a few of the disbelievers and disapprovers of my morning sail aboard Shadow. The preoccupied lobsterman who waves a friendly, gauntleted hand as he skews his vessel toward his next pot. (He is working; I am playing.) The distant, growly yacht running down toward Hog Island, and the nearer, bouncing, earsplitting runabout. (They are going fast and straight; I am going slow and in zigzags.) The kids coming down the gangplank onto the club float, with their spinnaker bags and their tactics. (I have happily given up racing.) My local friends and neighbors, at the general store and the post office and the boatyard. (They live here; I am forever from away.) But I am thinking even more of city friends—at home or in my office, in New York—who do not sail and know that I do, and can hardly bear the idea. "Going—uh, *sailing*, will you be?" they offer a day or two before my vacation starts. "Going off in your—uh, *boat*, I suppose?" I nod, I hope not too cheerfully, and we change the subject.

Some of it must be the language, although the argot of sailing is not much more arcane, to my ear, than that of golf or cooking or operagoing or flytying. But say "sloop," "close-reached," "starboard," "tiller," or "leeward" (as I have done here), or murmur "halyard," "jibe," "headsails," "genoa," and the rest with any air of familiarity (it's "heads'ls," I mean), and you are instantly seen as a dilettante, a poseur or a snob, a millionaire, and, almost surely, a Republican.



Is this fair? More to the point, is it true—can mere lingo do such damage? I doubt it. Out on the water, even during one of those eventless, inexorably slow, time-flattening stretches of sailing—nothing doing, nothing to do—I realize once again that my eye and hand are reacting almost on their own to the thousand sights and sounds and movements of sailing. The look of the mainsail along the luff, an infinitesimal tug on the tiller, the lift of the stern on a quartering sea—all lead, as if by reflex, to a countering small movement of my own. I am *sailing*, and, like countless thousands of other summer skippers, old and young, I am calling upon knowledge and responses that lie dormant during long months ashore but are there to be drawn upon for a lifetime. Even at this easy level, I am dealing with shifts and forces and counterflows—wind and tide and current—that are nearly invisible to the hapless nonsailing friend I have brought along this time, who now (the wind has freshened) looks at me with dislike, because I am in another realm: a medicine man in a baseball cap. It can't be helped, but sailing is exclusive. What the landsman senses and perhaps envies is exactly what grabs me at odd moments in a small boat in August. Here—for the length of this puff, this lift and heel—I am almost in touch with the motions of my planet: not at one with them but riding a little crest and enjoying the view. I smile across at my friend but say nothing. Eat your heart out, pal. ♦

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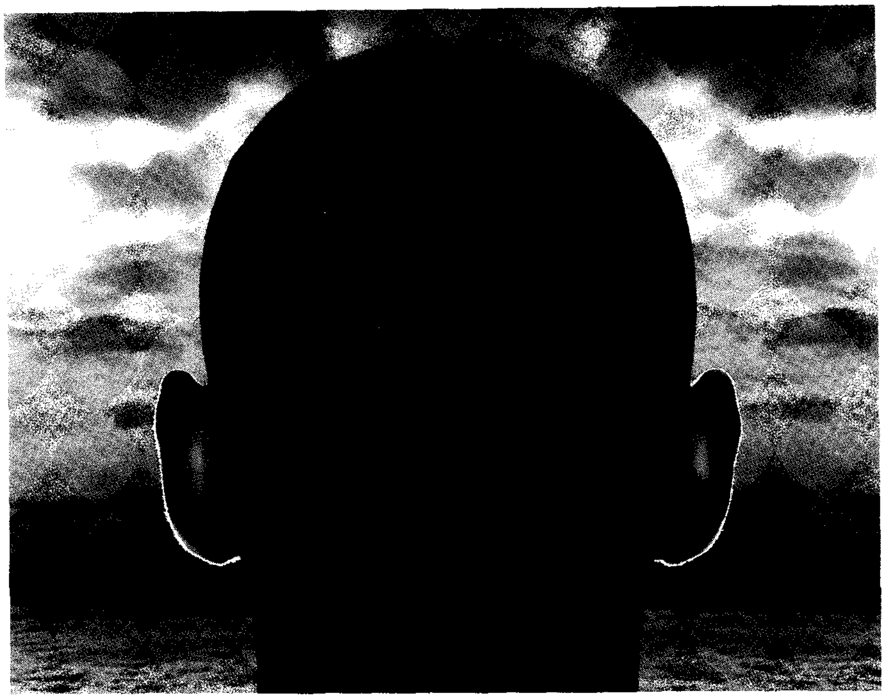

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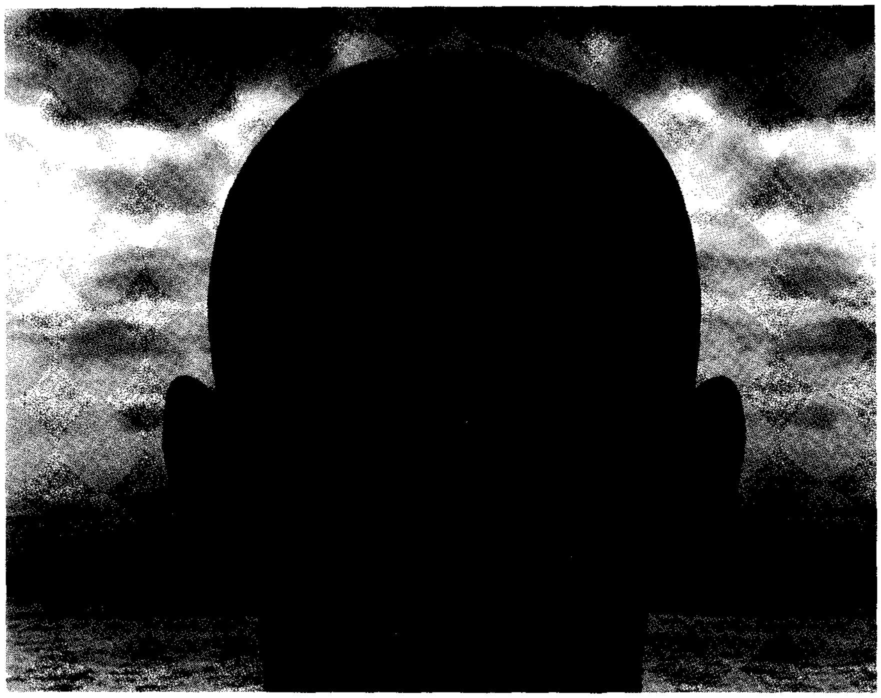

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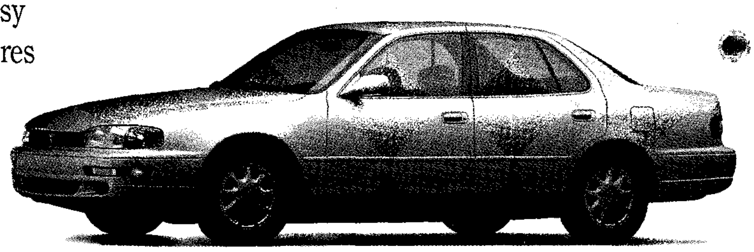

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